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GAME Player's™

THE LEADING MAGAZINE OF VIDEO AND COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT

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FRANKENSTEIN
SOLAR JETMAN
THE IMMORTAL
TOMBS
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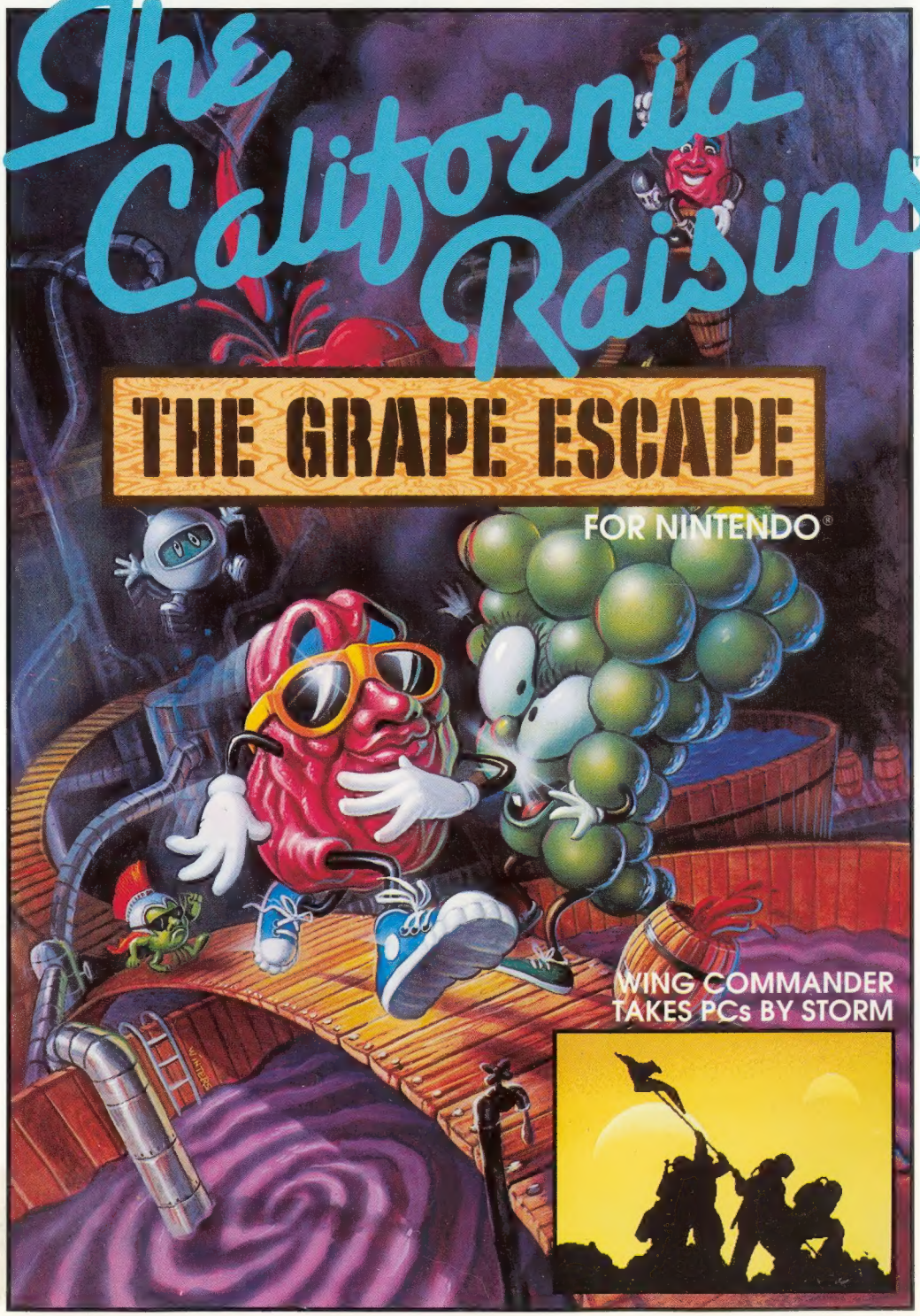

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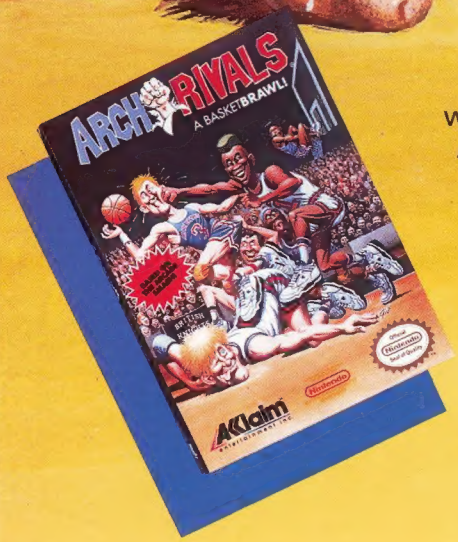

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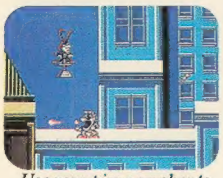

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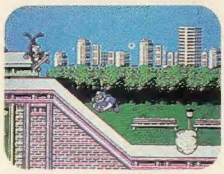
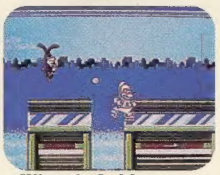


In Central Park, skateboard over bad guys and gain magic powers.



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The EDITOR'S VIEW

Except for the staff astrologer at the *National Enquirer*, almost nobody likes to make predictions in print. Predictions have a nasty way of coming back to haunt you a year later.

For instance, a year from now, will your favorite game system be the NES or the Genesis? Will you be toting a TurboExpress or a *color* Game Boy? Will you be playing games on a compact disc player or on a new Nintendo 16-bit game machine?

Throwing caution to the wind, I've listed some of my own unauthorized and unofficial predictions for 1991. At the very least, I hope you get as many laughs out of them as some of my fellow editors at *Game Player's* did!

Super Famicom. Nintendo's long-awaited 16-bit videogame system is already on sale in Japan and will reach the U.S. in 1991. Nintendo will exhibit the Super Famicom at the Summer Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago this June, then start selling it in August or September. And it'll be an instant hit.

Color Game Boy. I think Nintendo will do *something* in 1991 to enhance the Game Boy. For one thing, all of the other cartridge-based hand-helds — the Atari Lynx, the NEC TurboExpress, and the Sega Game Gear — have full-color screens. Of course, the Game Boy is still more popular than all the rest put together. But I think Nintendo might introduce a higher-priced Color Game Boy and keep the current version as a budget model. The Color Game Boy would be compatible with all existing Game Boy software.

Something else which makes me think Nintendo has big plans for the Game Boy is the hidden graphics quality of the machine. Have you ever looked *really close* at a Game Boy screen? Some games have details that are barely visible until the screens are enlarged photographically. Believe it or not, the Game Boy actually has greater screen resolution than the Lynx — you just can't see it on that tiny 2.5-inch LCD.

CDTV. Commodore Dynamic Total Vision is expected to make its belated debut in February. By combining a CD-ROM player with a stripped-down Amiga computer and disguising the whole thing to look like a remote-controlled VCR, Commodore hopes to introduce a new style of home entertainment and education to people who fear personal computers. Frankly, I think Commodore's marketing people face a tough battle, but I also think they're on the right track. Even if CDTV fails, I believe their vision of the home computer of the 1990s is closer to the mark than anything on the market today.

Software shakeout. There are now more than 60 companies licensed by Nintendo to make NES games. For the first time, the market is becoming glutted with Nintendo cartridges. To avoid getting stuck with unwanted inventory, some stores are marking down prices to $20 or less. Although I don't foresee a crash like the one that sank so many videogame companies in 1983, I do predict that several companies will be forced to withdraw from the Nintendo market in 1991. Others will cut back on the number of titles they offer. It'll be a good year to take advantage of closeout sales.

More predictions. Atari will introduce a lower-priced Lynx II with a smaller screen. Sega and NEC will each cut the prices of their 16-bit game systems by $20 or so to fight the Super Famicom. Nintendo will finally launch its on-line network, then struggle to gain consumer acceptance. Philips will finally launch CD/I (compact disc interactive), casting a long shadow over CDTV. A vocal political group will demand that videogames carry ratings or warning labels for objectionable material, like movies and record albums.

Let's meet back here a year from now and see how everything turned out!

Tom R. Halfhill
Editor, *Game Player's*

GP

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January 1991

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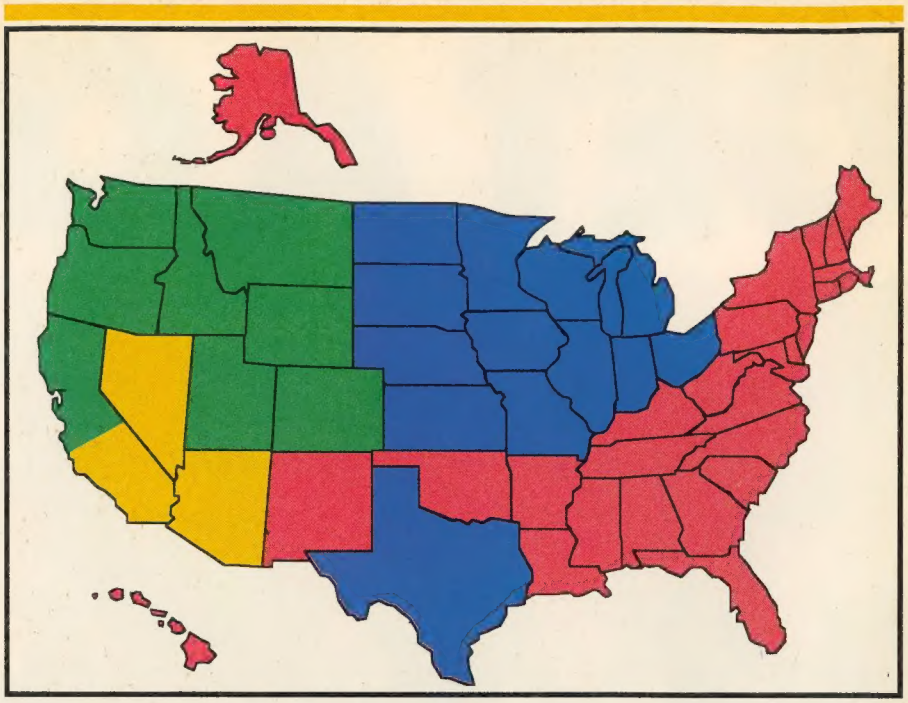

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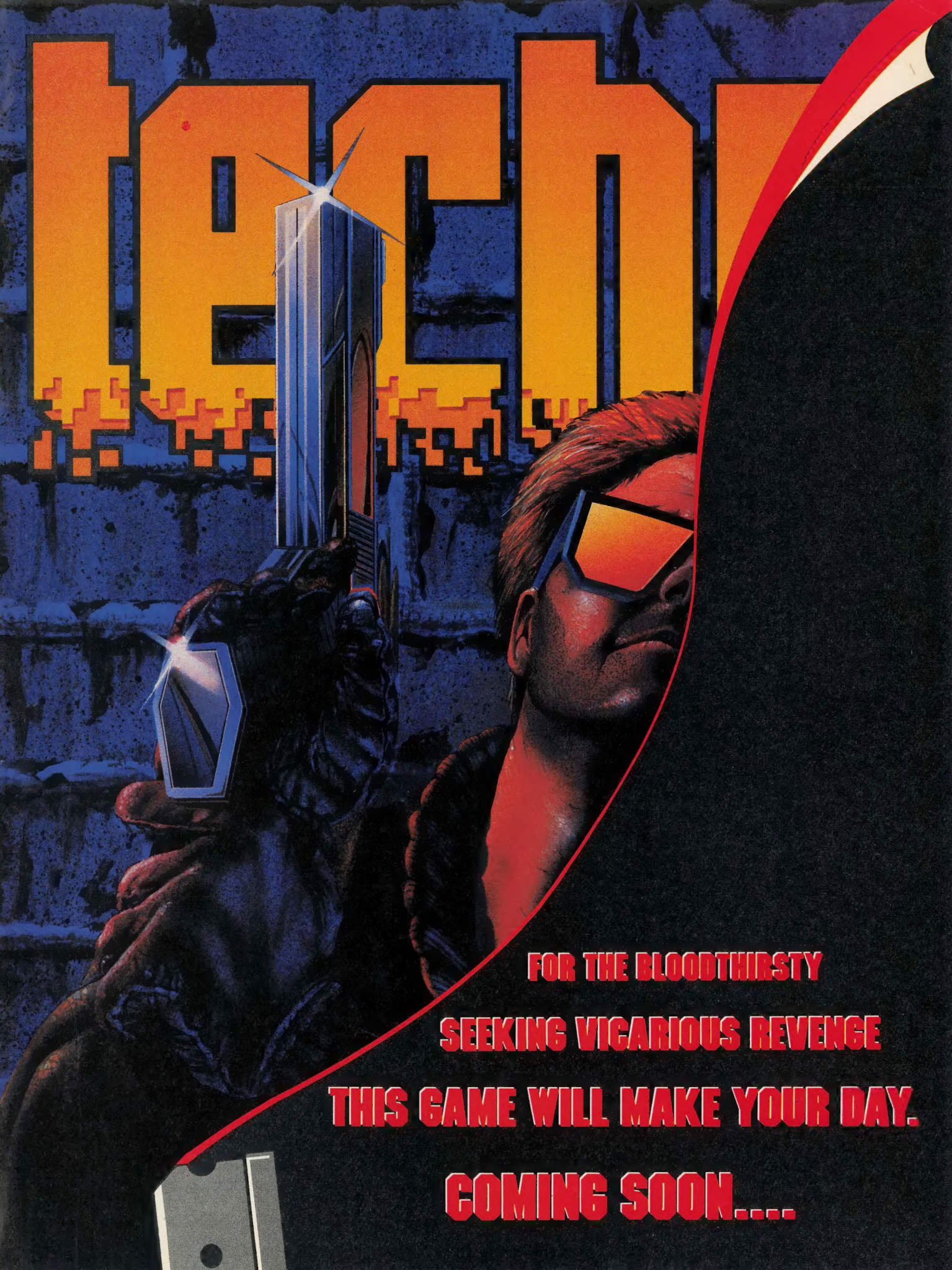
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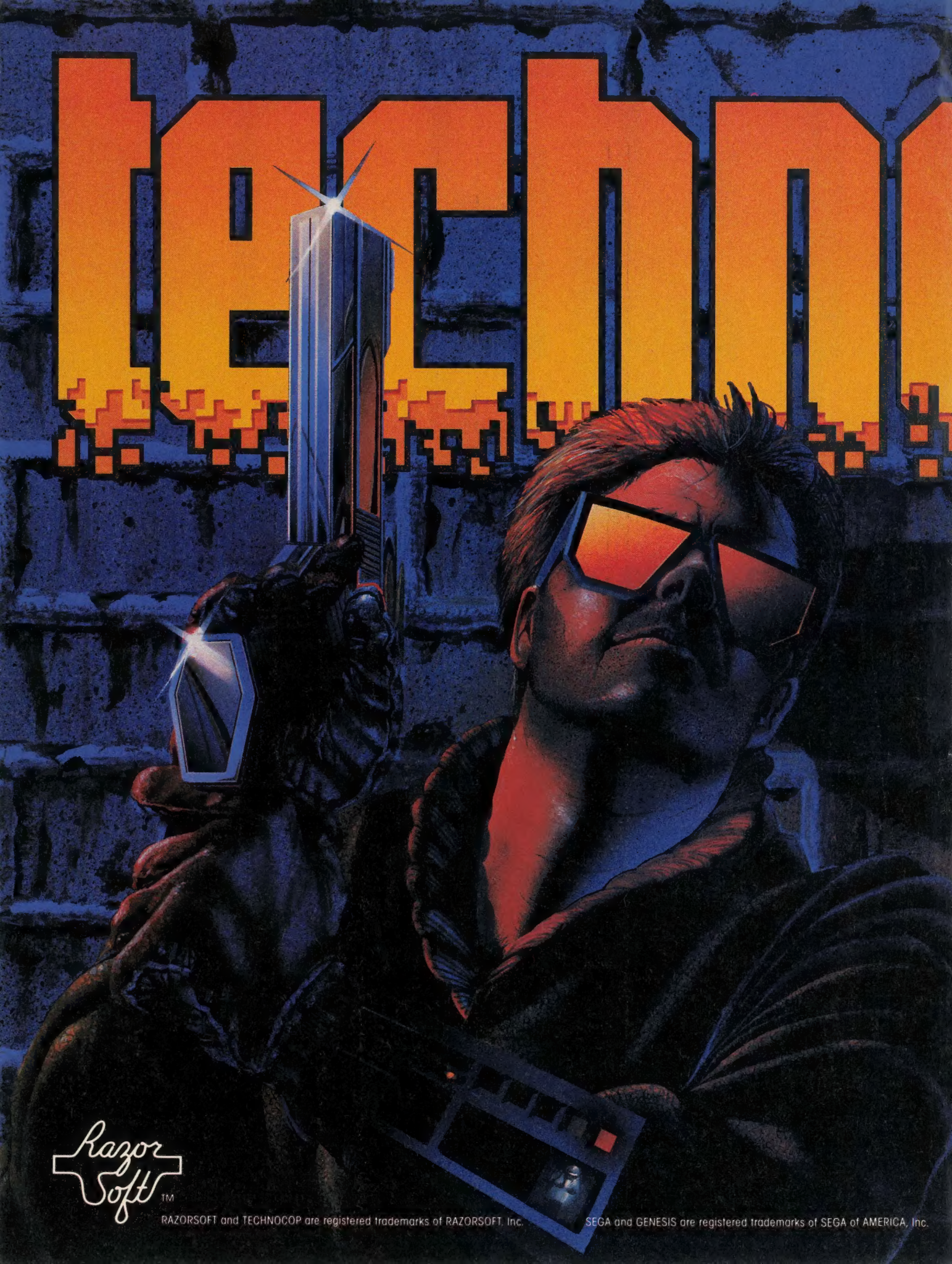

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Zelda II: The Adventure Of Link

I'm stumped on Nintendo's *Zelda II: The Adventure of Link*. I can't find the hammer. Where is it?

Cindy Bates
Texas

Just beyond Saria, you'll enter Death Mountain. Follow these directions: Go right through five different caves, then down through three caves. Now go to your left and you'll see a hole in the middle of a clearing. Go inside the hole, then turn right and go down an elevator. On the bottom floor, you'll find the hammer on the right and a magic potion on the left.

King's Quest IV

How do you get the flute from Pan in *KQIV*? I keep running out of time and he runs away.

Jay Fisher
Illinois

You can't just wait for Pan to hand you the flute — you have to offer him something in return. Everything in King's Quest *works on the barter system. In Pan's case, you need a musical instrument. Remember the wandering minstrel who can't play his lute? Offer the minstrel something in trade for his lute, then give it to Pan in return for the flute.*

Do you have any questions about your favorite video games or computer games? Or do you have any hints and tips to share with your fellow game players? If so, write to The Tip Sheet, Game Player's, P.O. Box 29364, Greensboro, NC 27429. Due to the volume of mail we receive, we regret that we cannot reply individually to mail to game questions.

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

I was wondering how to use the rope in *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* for Nintendo.

Trever Smith
Colorado

When you're on the top of certain buildings, you'll see a pole. When you touch the pole, your turtle automatically swings the rope and gets to the next building.

Pacland

Here's how to get practically invincible in *Pacland* for the NEC TurboGrafx-16. First, push buttons I and II. A screen will appear that says "My Pac 3" and "Skip Off." You can get nine lives by pressing button I. After that, go to "Skip Off" and push button I so the screen reads "Skip On." Now push the Start button twice. A screen appears that says "Skip 1." If you press down on the directional pad 100 times, the screen will read "No Hit." If you push right on the directional pad, you'll jump to level 1-32.

Eric Styranka
Ohio

Thanks for the tip!

Alex Kidd In High-Tech World

In *Alex Kidd in High-Tech World*, I can only seem to get seven pieces of the map. I've gotten the ones from Pappa, Paul, Mary, James, Tom, Mark, the one in Trask and the Bervants. Could you tell me how to get all eight pieces of the map?

Brian Morgan
Ohio

Go to the third floor and climb up the ladder to the clock. When you set the clock correctly, you'll get the eighth piece of the map.

GP

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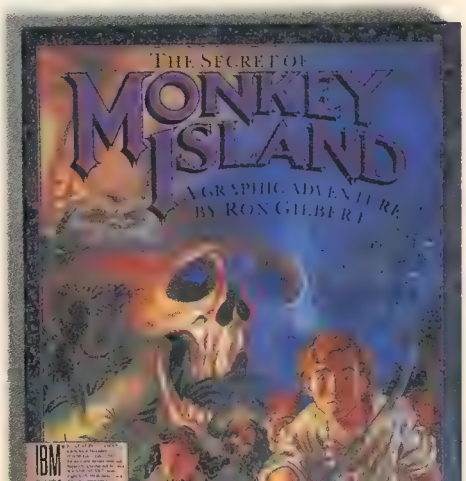

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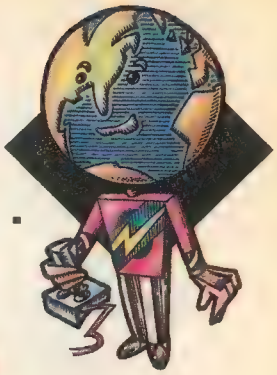

SEGA'S PORTABLE HITS JAPAN

Tony Takoushi
and Tom R. Halfhill

If you want a hand-held game machine but can't make up your mind between the Nintendo Game Boy, the Atari Lynx, and the NEC TurboExpress, your decision will soon get even more difficult. Sega recently became the fourth company to bring out a cartridge-based portable videogame system.

Sega's Game Gear made its official debut in Japan in early October. It's expected to reach the United States by mid-1991, and other parts of the world later in the year.

In terms of overall quality, features, and price, the Game Gear falls somewhere in the midst of its three competitors. Its color screen and graphics are roughly equivalent to the Lynx, but it offers options that until now were available only on the TurboExpress, currently the most expensive of the four portables.

The Japanese price for the Game Gear is 19,800 yen, about $152 in U.S. currency. That compares to $89 for the Game Boy, $189 for the Lynx, and $249 for the TurboExpress. However, the Game Gear does not come with some accessories that are standard with the Lynx, such as an AC power adapter and a cable that links two machines together for multiplayer games. Also, the Japanese price does not necessarily indicate what the Game Gear will sell for when it's introduced in other countries.

Game Gear software comes on credit-card-size cartridges, similar to those for other hand-held systems.

Sega's Game Gear went on sale in Japan in October.

Because of its horizontal layout, the Game Gear bears some resemblance to the Lynx, and is unlike the vertically oriented Game Boy and TurboExpress. It is about 7 inches wide, 3.5 inches tall, and 1.25 inches deep. The color liquid-crystal display (LCD) screen measures about 2.75 inches diagonally. That's a little larger than the 2.5-inch black-and-white screen of the Game Boy and the 2.6-inch color screen of the TurboExpress, but smaller than the 3.5-inch color screen of the Lynx. The Game Gear's screen is backlit, like that of the Lynx, so it can be played in dim light. But it does not use the higher-quality active-matrix design of the TurboExpress.

To the left of the Game Gear's screen is a directional pad, and on the right are three control buttons labeled 1, 2, and Start. At the lower left is a tiny speaker.

On top of the unit is an on-off switch, a volume control, a stereo headphone mini-jack, an auxiliary input jack, and an AC power connector. The machine runs on six

NIGHTMARE ON YOUR STREET.

A Nightmare ON ELM STREET

If you go to sleep dreaming about video games--*don't*. Freddy's back and he's taken on a terrifying new form. You and your friends must search the neighborhood for Freddy's bones. When you enter the fateful house on Elm Street, you'll confront monsters and spooks that would give even Freddy a fright!

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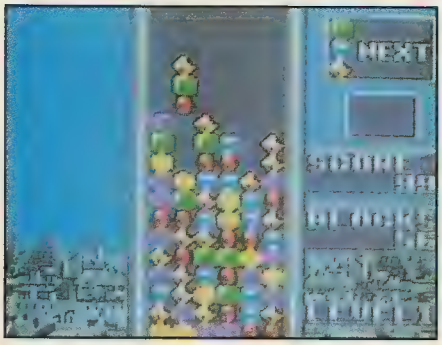
Notice the English and Japanese labeling on this bright package for the Game Gear in Japan.



The Game Gear version of *Columns* is nearly identical to the Genesis version.

AA batteries, which last about three or four hours.

The auxiliary input jack is for hooking up an optional VHF/UHF tuner which turns the Game Gear into a portable TV, just like NEC's TurboVision tuner for the TurboExpress. In Japan, the Game Gear's TV tuner is priced at 12,800 yen, about $99 in U.S. currency. You can also plug a video camcorder into the auxiliary input jack, allowing the Game Gear to function as a portable color monitor.

Other accessories include an AC power adapter for 3,500 yen ($27), a 12-volt cigarette lighter adapter for 1,500 yen ($12), a rechargeable battery pack for 6,800 yen ($52), and a two-player link-up cable for 1,400 yen ($11).

Sega considered several possible designs for the Game Gear and settled on one which requires its own special game cards; it's not compatible with existing Sega Genesis or Master System cartridges. Some of the Game Gear's new titles will be familiar to Sega fans, though.

For example, *Columns* is a *Tetris*-style puzzle game that recently came out for the Genesis, and the Game Gear version is almost identical.

Super Monaco GP is another Genesis title that's available for the Game Gear, although the portable version is a little different from the Genesis and arcade versions. An option menu lets you customize your car's body, tires, engine, and transmission, and the first race you enter is the Brazilian Grand Prix. A status panel shows the race course, your current position, the lap number, and the elapsed time. Collisions with roadside obstructions or other cars cost you speed, and you win points by finishing in the top six positions.

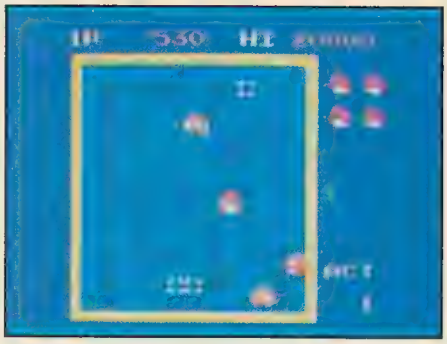
Pengo is a chase game based on an old Atari arcade machine. Your goal is to move around the screen and push diamond blocks onto pursuing characters known as Snobees. It's a fast, simple game with crisp graphics.

G-LOC is based on a Sega arcade game that's like a super version of *Afterburner* — you pilot an F-14 Tomcat jet on various combat missions. *Super Wonderboy* is another installment in the *Wonder Boy* series of action games previously seen on the Master System and Genesis. Other expected games are *Wonder Boy* and *Cyberball*.

Super Monaco GP is a car-racing game that varies a bit from the Genesis and arcade versions.

In Japan, Game Gear titles are selling for 2,900 to 3,500 yen — about $22 to $27 in U.S. currency.

Inside the Game Gear is an eight-bit microprocessor chip, the Zilog Z80A, running at a speed of 3.57 megahertz. The machine has eight kilobytes (64 kilobits) of random access memory (RAM), plus another 16 kilobytes (128 kilobits) of video RAM. Screen resolution is 480 by 146 pixels with 4,096 possible colors, and up to 32 colors can be displayed on the screen at once. Other technical features include a custom video graphics chip and true stereo sound.


Pengo is based on an old Atari arcade game.

These specifications are comparable to those of other handheld game systems, although the TurboExpress still leads the pack in terms of graphics.

Sega of America says it will announce a U.S. version of the Game Gear at the Winter Consumer Electronics Show, which opens in Las Vegas in early January. The system is expected to hit U.S. stores a few months later.

GP

SILVER SURFER
From the farthest reaches of space comes the most awesome superhero of all ... The Silver Surfer.
The non-stop action of this 3 MEGA firepower, intergalactic shoot 'em up game will challenge all of your battle skills, as you fearlessly fight the evil minds of the cosmos. Only you, as The Silver Surfer, can keep the Universe from entering an age of darkness and distress by preventing the Magik Warriors from swarming into our dimension.
Superior graphics, music and sound effects, make Silver Surfer the hottest game in the galaxy!
2 Much Action!
SILVER SURFER
2Much!
SPOT™ THE VIDEO GAME
Sharpen your strategy skills as you test your wit in this cool new game!
Select a playfield from one of the 512 pre-programmed options, or customize your own game for an endless amount of play possibilities. In either case, you'll enjoy a brand new challenge each time you play!
Available for NES and Game Boy, both feature 5 levels of complexity for a mind-bending mental workout!
2 Much Intensity!
GAME BOY
LICENSED BY NINTENDO FOR PLAY ON THE
Nintendo
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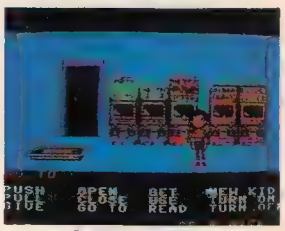
ARCADIA SYSTEMS, INC.
18001 Cowan Street, Suite A
Irvine, CA 92714
Tel: (714) 833-8710

Welcome to Maniac Mansion! Heh-heh-heh-heh!!!

Once you go in, you may never come out!

The weirdest house on the block!

"Dr. Fred should chill out."



A game of life or death.

Watch the Maniac Mansion TV Show on The Family Channel

Official Nintendo Seal of Quality

Maniac Mansion®

JALECO™

Why is there a chainsaw in the kitchen?

And a scalpel-wielding doctor with an attitude? And a cheerleader held captive in the basement?

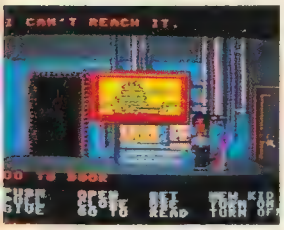
Just your average day in Maniac Mansion®! Totally weird! Definitely wacky! It's the first game for your Nintendo Entertainment System® that combines the challenge of a mystery with the off-the-wall humor Americans love.

Your goal – rescue the cheerleader and keep the mad doctor from taking over the world. There are over 50 rooms to search for clues. A cast of dangerous characters to avoid. And five completely different endings. It's even based on the original from LucasFilm Games.

You pick three of seven teenagers to go inside to solve the mystery. Who you pick determines the course of the game.

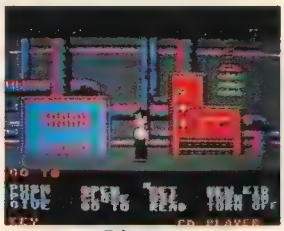
Want to take a break? No problem. Maniac Mansion's battery back-up always saves your place.

Maniac Mansion is different every time – sometimes scary... sometimes silly... but always a challenge... the kind of a game that will keep you up nights trying to figure it out – or afraid to fall asleep!

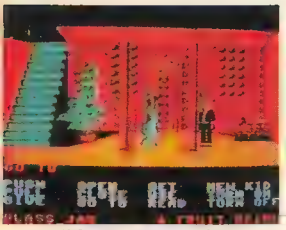


The secret lab.

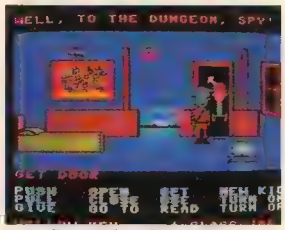
This box is ticking!


Listen!
A nuclear reactor!

"I'll suck out your brains!"


The Tentacle is hungry!

Don't get Weird Ed's hamster mad.



Into the dungeon, Dog Breath!

This mummy is no dummy!

"Nurse Edna, you are U-G-L-Y."

A chainsaw in the kitchen!?

The hamster's in the microwave!!

Look for clues on the film.

The mystery has just begun.

($1.75 first minute; 90¢ each additional minute.)

Get the official Maniac Mansion Hint Book. Call 1-800-STARWARS

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GENESI
WHAT NIN

ARCADE GAMES:

Super Monaco GP™

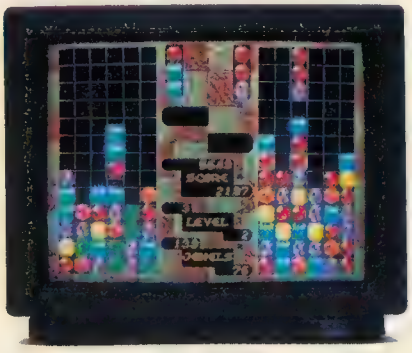
Michael Jackson's Moonwalker™

E-SWAT™

ADVENTURE GAMES:

The Sword of Vermilion™

STRATEGY GAMES:



Columns™

ACTION GAMES:

Dynamite Duke™

Get the hottest new video games going. Arcade, sports, adventure, strategy and action hits available only on the 16-bit Genesis System by Sega.™

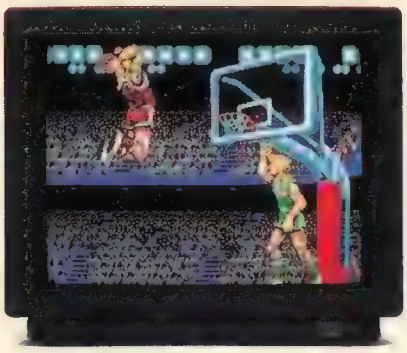
Today's latest blockbuster arcade hits like Super Monaco GP.™ Climb into the cockpit of the world's fastest Grand Prix machines as you race wheel to wheel through the streets at over two-hundred miles per hour. Or take on the evil villain Mr. Big in Michael Jackson's Moonwalker™ as you use dance-kicks, hat-tricks and finally transform into a powerful robot that does it all. Or become a Cybercop in E-SWAT™ and clean up the city besieged by mad terrorists.

Get ready for the most action-packed sports games ever. In Joe Montana

S DOES TENDON'T.

SPORTS GAMES:

Joe Montana Football™



Pat Riley Basketball™

James "Buster" Douglas Knockout Boxing™

Football,™ check out the defense, make the call, fake a pass and scramble for a touchdown. Or force your opponent to move inside your left hook and nail him with an uppercut that puts him on the mat in James "Buster" Douglas Knockout Boxing.™ Or in Pat Riley Basketball,™ get the ball with seven seconds left in the game, drive the length of the court, slam-dunk and draw the foul which you make to break the tie.

In The Sword of Vermilion,™ make your way through 14 towns and 14 mazes in this adventure thriller where encounters with the evil demons are played in real time on the hand controller. And dazzle your friends with your skills on the puzzle game Columns.™ Or become the ultimate commando warrior in Dynamite Duke™ as you blast the enemy from an over-your-shoulder first person view.

There's only one true 16-bit system and it's got the hottest video game hits going. You can only play these on Genesis by Sega. Genesis does what Nintendon't.

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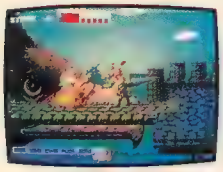
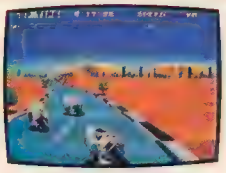
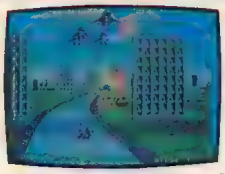
GENESIS DOES IT ALL.

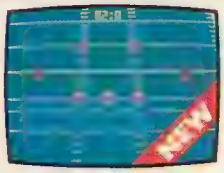
ARCADE GAMES:

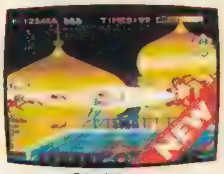

Golden Axe™

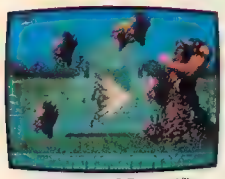
Space Harrier II™

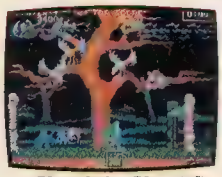

Super Hang-On™

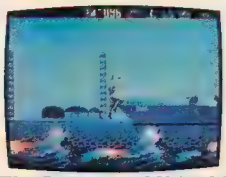

Super Thunder Blade™

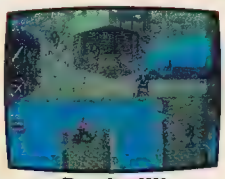

Cyberball™


Strider™

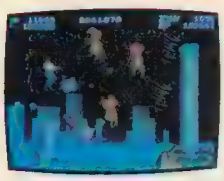

Altered Beast™


Ghouls 'n Ghosts™


The Revenge of Shinobi™

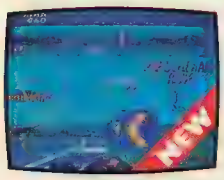

Rambo III®

Truxton™

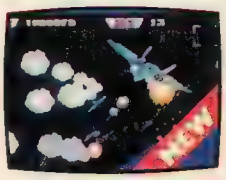

Forgotten Worlds™

MUSIC VIDEO:

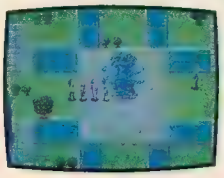
ADVENTURE GAMES:


Super Monaco GP™

E-S.W.A.T. City Under Siege™

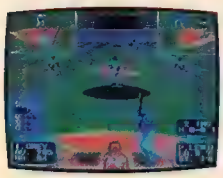

Afterburner II™

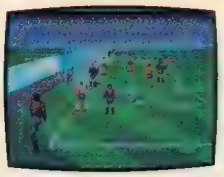
Michael Jackson's Moonwalker™

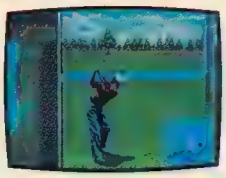

Phantasy Star II™

The Sword of Vermillion™

SPORTS GAMES:


Tommy Lasorda Baseball™


World Championship Soccer™

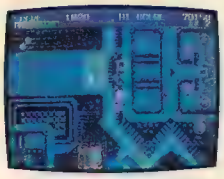

Arnold Palmer Tournament Golf™

Pat Riley's Basketball™

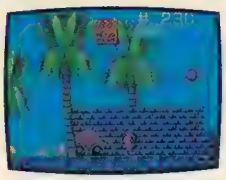
James "Buster" Douglas Knockout Boxing™

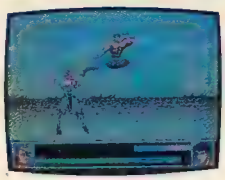
Joe Montana Football™*

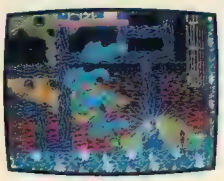
ACTION GAMES:


Thunder Force II™

Ghostbusters II™


Alex Kidd: Enchanted Castle™

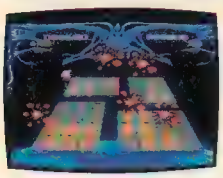

Last Battle™


Mystic Defender™

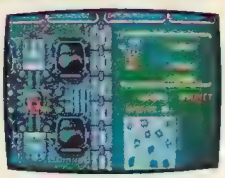
Dynamite Duke™

STRATEGY/PUZZLE GAMES:

COMING SOON!


Zoom!™

Columns™


Herzog Zwei™

Dick Tracy®

Spider-Man®*

The Castle of Illusion™ Starring Mickey Mouse

SEGA GENESIS™

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17 COMPANIES HAVE EARNED THE RIGHT TO DISPLAY THIS SEAL.

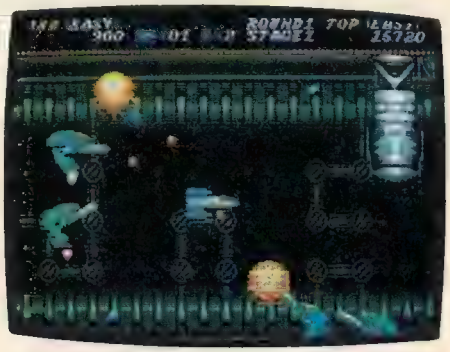
TRECO Atomic Robo-Kid™
Trash mutant life-forms and save the earth in this radical adventure!

NUVISION ENTERTAINMENT INC Bimini Run™
A unique, action-packed, high-seas adventure where strange sea creatures tax your skills.

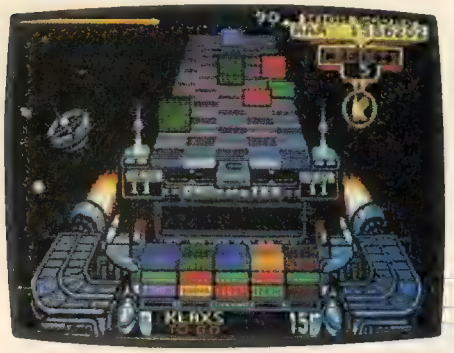
RENOVATION PRODUCTS Whip Rush™
A horizontal and vertical scrolling game where you operate a mighty jet fighter and challenge seven stages of shooting scenes.

INTV CORPORATION Curse™
An intense shooter as you fly an attack craft through alien hazards to reach the ultimate goal—the quest of the Solar Grail!

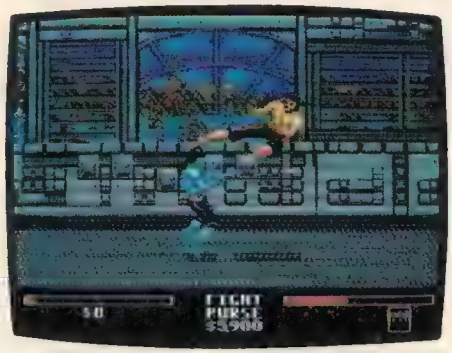
KANEKO DJ Boy™
Rollerskate to action and win the ultimate street fight challenge.



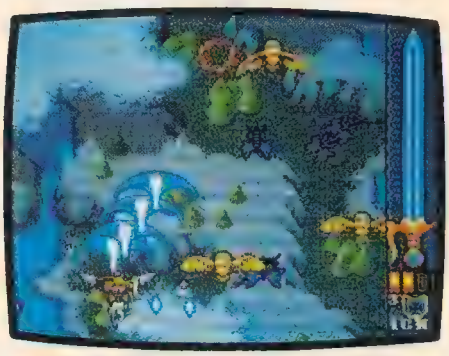
SEGSMIC Hell Fire™
Shoot or die in this horizontal scrolling shooting game.



TENGEN Klax™
Move fast and think faster in this strategic video challenge. Catch and arrange color tiles coming down conveyer belt—this is a scream!



ACTIVISION Mondu's Fight Palace™
Role playing fun, hit music and great sound effects for 1 or 2 players—outrageous!



namco Phelios™
Apollo challenges enemies to rescue Artemis in this arcade classic with vivid graphics and animation.

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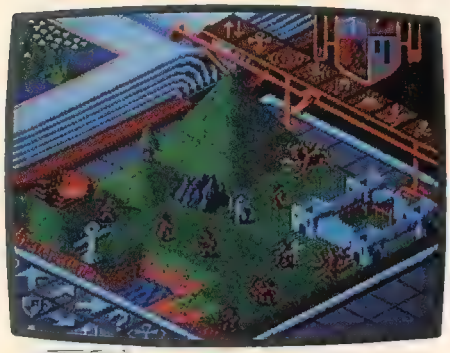

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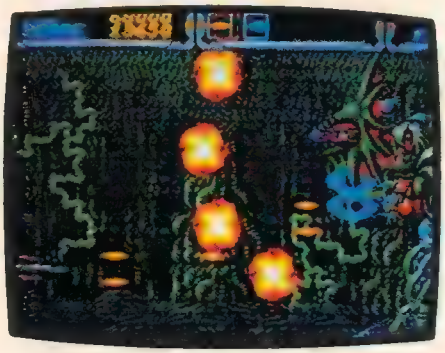
Play God! Create the world or destroy it in a heartbeat. Control awesome natural disasters. The first game of its kind.



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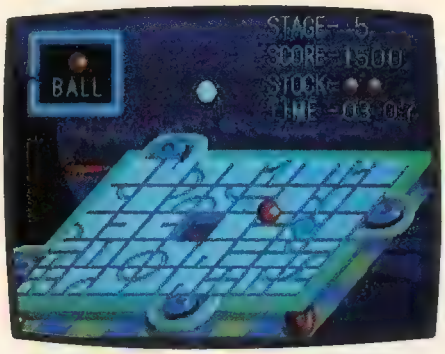

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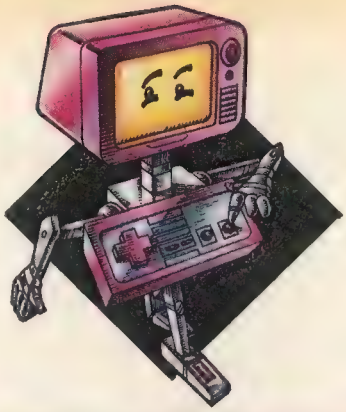


NINTENDO NEWS

Konami Laserscope

Jeff Lundrigan

Something new and a little different is now available from Konami — the Laserscope Optical Command Headset. Usable with any game that requires Nintendo's Zapper light gun, the Laserscope consists of stereo headphones, a swiveling mouthpiece with a microphone, and a detachable eyepiece that hangs in front of your right eye. The unit has an eight-foot cord that plugs into the second controller port and the audio jack of a Nintendo Entertainment System.

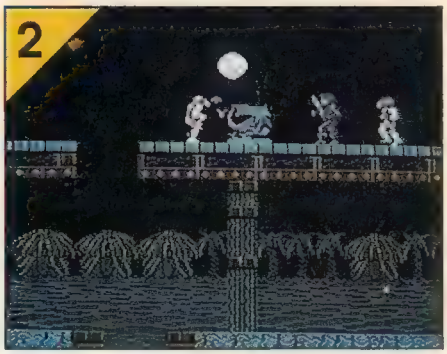
Thanks to the audio connection, you can now listen to the game's music and sound effects through the Laserscope's stereo headphones (although the sound is still in mono, since the NES doesn't have true stereo). You take aim by looking through a set of red crosshairs that are projected onto a clear blue monocle that hangs over your eye. To fire, you just say "Fire!" into the microphone. The Laserscope then fires a shot at whatever target the crosshairs are centered on.

Actually, the Laserscope does not recognize different voice commands—*any* sound you make that's loud enough to be picked up by the microphone will tell the Laserscope to fire. You could say "Shoot!", "Pow!", "Zap!", or even the ever-popular "Die, scum!"

We found that you have to shout fairly loudly before the microphone hears your command, which is an odd design conflict. One of Konami's selling points for the Laserscope is that you can listen to Nintendo games through the headphones and not bother anyone else, since the TV sound can be turned off. But then it leaves you there yelling in front of the set. Fortunately, a little experimentation proved that you can also fire shots by simply blowing into the microphone. This drops the noise level back to near-silence.

The Laserscope takes a little practice to use. For one thing, you have to learn how to track objects with your eyes while keeping your head pointed steadily at the target. If you turn your whole head to look somewhere else on the screen, you'll miss what you're aiming at when you shoot.

Focusing on the screen while looking through the crosshairs takes some getting used to as well, since your instinct is to focus on whatever is directly in front of your eyes. In addition, the crosshairs — actually a pattern of red LEDs — have different markings for aiming at the screen from various distances. (We got good results at distances of about five or six feet.) Despite all this, it doesn't take more than a few minutes to get the hang of things.

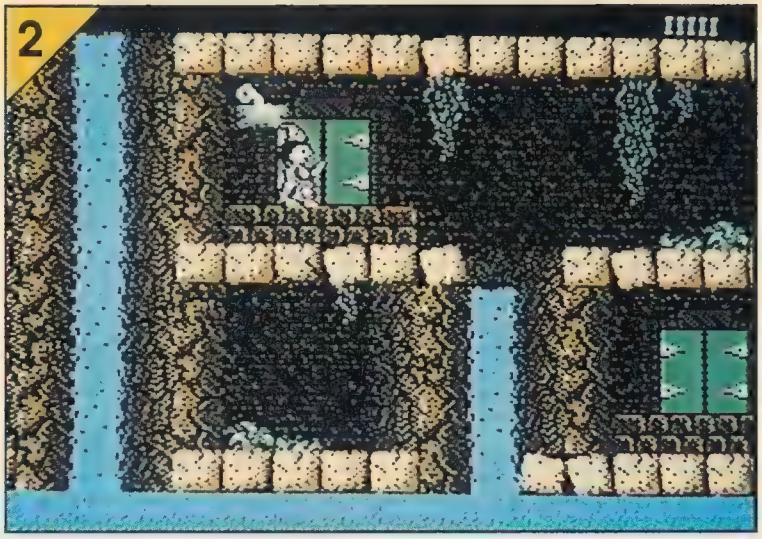


One interesting feature of the Laserscope is that the eyepiece can be detached from the headset and the microphone can be swung out of the way. The stereo headphones can then be used with a Game Boy or a Walkman-style cassette player, thanks to an extra set of stereo plugs included with the

1 If you like shooting games, Konami's Laserscope is an interesting alternative to Nintendo's Zapper light gun.

2 *Challenge of the Dragon* is the latest release from Color Dreams.

NINTENDO NEWS



Laserscope. A switch on the headset lets you choose between Nintendo sound or another sound source.

A second switch on the headset lets you select turbo-fire. We found this feature a little unnecessary, since you can get much the same effect by drawing out whatever noise you make when firing. When turbo-fire is switched off, in fact, it takes a little practice *not* to fire multiple shots.

Since the Laserscope relies on your head and voice for all commands, it leaves your hands free to use some other controller, which is a potentially interesting opportunity. (Remember, the Laserscope plugs into controller port 2, leaving port 1 open for another device.) At the moment, very few games require the use of both a Zapper and a regular control pad, which is hardly surprising. In fact, only one game, *Gotcha*, comes to mind.

However, Konami may be working on more games that will take advantage of this ability to use multiple controllers. Can you imagine wearing both a Laserscope *and* a Mattel Power Glove?

The Laserscope looks a little gimmicky, but it works. If you're hooked on Zapper games, it's an enjoyable alternative.

Goodbye Gray?

Nintendo of America recently announced that it will permit independent game companies to manufacture their own Nintendo cartridges. Until now, Nintendo manufactured all Nintendo cartridges, even those sold by independent companies. This prevented the independents from making their own cartridges or seeking out less-expensive manufacturing elsewhere.

What does this mean to Nintendo players? Well, for starters, it will probably mean that the uniformly gray Nintendo cartridges you're used to popping into your deck will give way to a wider variety of colors.

More importantly, however, it could *theoretically* lead to lower prices for Nintendo games, although it's doubtful the drop will be dramatic. Lower manufacturing costs don't always result in lower prices at the store. For instance, the manufacturing cost of audio compact discs has dropped dramatically over the past five years, but CDs still cost $12-$15 because the record companies don't want to lower their prices. The same thing could happen with Nintendo games.

Also, some manufacturing costs probably won't drop. Even though the independents are now free to make their own cartridges,

1 *Puzzle* is one of four new unlicensed Nintendo games coming from American Video Entertainment.

2 *Castle of Deceit* is the first Nintendo title from Bunch Games.

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NINTENDO NEWS

they still have to pay royalties to and buy certain parts from Nintendo. It definitely won't affect prices this holiday season, since most companies have already placed their cartridge orders with Nintendo through early 1991.

Another possible effect of Nintendo's new policy is that there will be fewer shortages of popular games. In the past, Nintendo controlled how many copies of a game were manufactured. When a game became a hit, supplies would often dry up because Nintendo would limit the number of cartridges that could be made. Now the game companies are free to make as many cartridges as they want. This in itself may lower prices through the simple law of supply and demand.

However, the threat of ending up with thousands of unsold cartridges should keep the game companies from going overboard with their manufacturing. Everybody remembers that many companies went bankrupt in the early 1980s when they got stuck with warehouses full of unsold Atari 2600 cartridges.

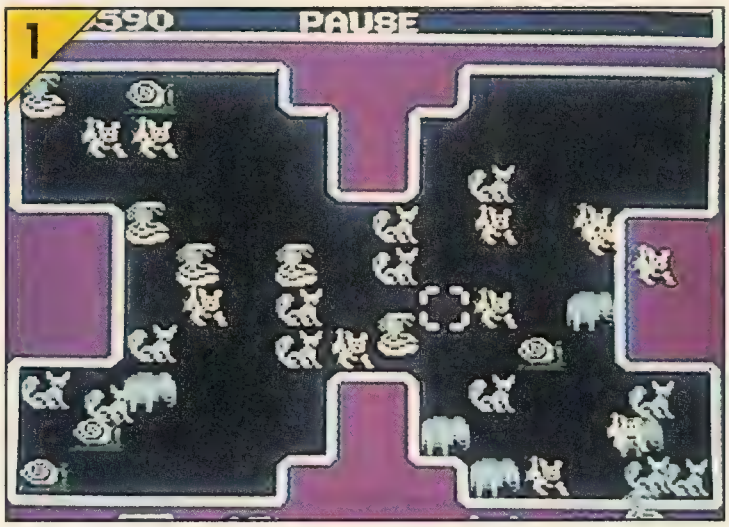
Unlicensed Games

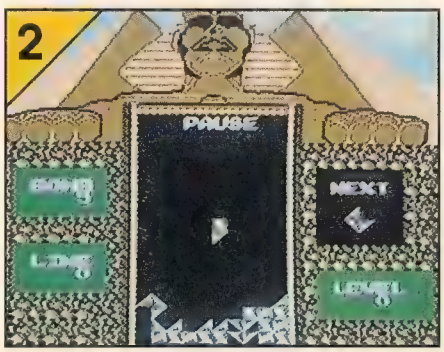
A handful of game companies aren't directly affected by Nintendo's new policy. They're already manufacturing their own cartridges, because they aren't licensed by Nintendo. But since many stores won't carry unlicensed cartridges, their games are pretty hard to find.

Color Dreams has been in the unlicensed Nintendo business for some time, and the newest release is *Challenge of the Dragon*. In this arcade-style adventure game, you try to free the kingdom of Lorin from the clutches of an evil wizard. Each of the game's ten levels throws a different mix of ninjas and other such enemies at you, giving the game a distinctly Japanese flavor.

Bunch Games is a newcomer and has released its first Nintendo game, *Castle of Deceit*, another arcade-style adventure. In order to save the world, you must find the mystic runes of guarding, then recover the wards of protection from a series of underground castles.

American Video Entertainment, another new unlicensed company, has also released its first Nintendo titles. *Puzzle* is based on those children's tile games in which you shuffle small squares within a frame to assemble a complete picture. *Krazy Kreatures* is an oddly addictive game in which animals and other objects bounce onto the playing field, and you have to move them around to get a certain number in a row before the field fills up. *Pyramid* is a *Tetris*-style game which uses triangles instead of squares and seems more difficult than *Tetris*. And still to come from AVE is *F-15: City War*, a jet fighter shoot-em-up.

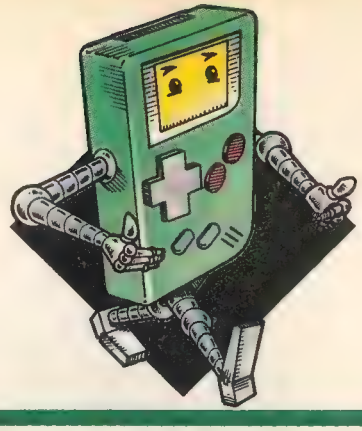




GP

1 AVE's *Krazy Kreatures* has so-so graphics but is unusually addictive.

2 *Pyramid*, another game from AVE, is similar to *Tetris*.

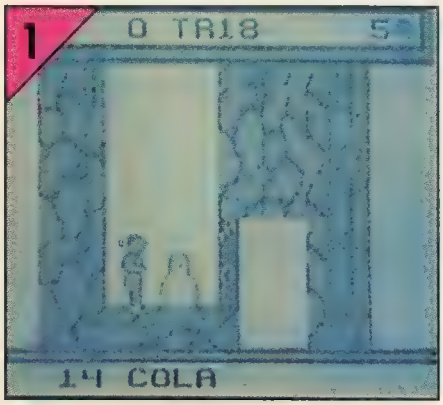


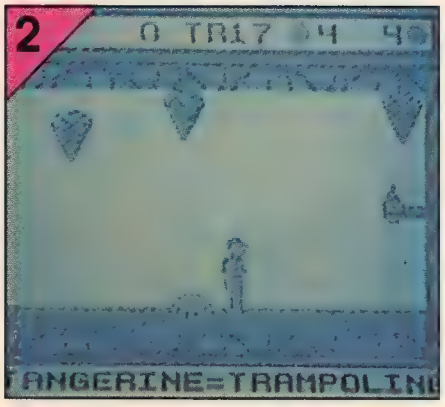
GAME BOY PLAYERS

The Rescue of Princess Blobette

Stephen Poole

It's been almost a year since Nintendo gamers were first introduced to Blobert (Blob for short) in *A Boy and His Blob* from Absolute Entertainment. Blob, a friendly alien, came to Earth seeking help for his home planet, Blobolonia. An Evil Emperor had taken control of Blobolonia and was forcing bad nutrition on the people. Joining forces with a young Earth boy, Blob and his new friend succeeded in overcoming the Evil Emperor and restoring health to Blobolonia.

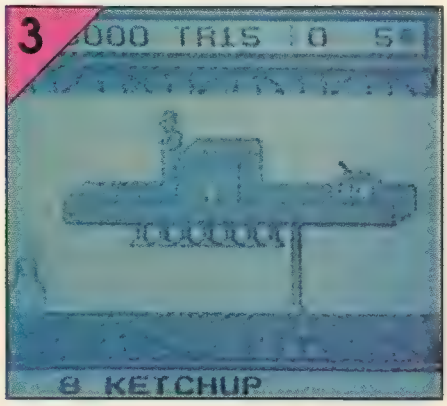


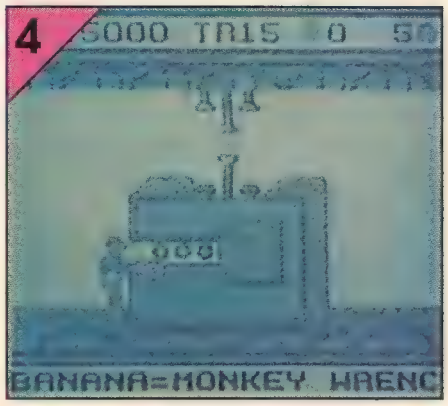


A Boy and His Blob had all the right ingredients for success: a lovable title character, colorful graphics, and absorbing game play that rewarded problem-solving and creativity. By feeding Blob different flavors of jellybeans, you could transform him into various shapes. A tangerine jellybean would turn him into a trampoline; a cola jellybean turned him into a bubble.

A Boy and His Blob was created by acclaimed game designer David Crane. Although this was Crane's first Nintendo game, he's hardly a newcomer to the videogame industry. His game *Pitfall!* — written for the Atari 2600 in the early 1980s — was the best-selling videogame cartridge of all time in the U.S. and Canada, according to Absolute Entertainment. *A Boy and His Blob* also sold well and won several awards for Crane.

When a Nintendo game enjoys that kind of success, a sequel is almost guaranteed, and *A Boy and His Blob* is no exception. This time, however, Absolute Entertainment is bringing the adventures of Blobert to the Game Boy. Although the characters and the settings have been shrunk to fit the Game Boy screen, *The Rescue of Princess Blobette* retains most of the charm and nearly all of the playability of *A Boy and His Blob*. While there are a few qualities missing from *The Rescue of Princess Blobette* that helped win so much praise for *A Boy and His Blob*, the essentials remain unchanged.





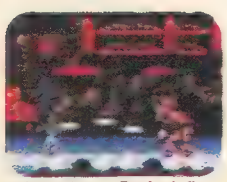
1 When the game starts, you're locked inside a castle tower. You don't have any jellybeans that can help Blob open the door, but if you look around, you might find a new flavor that will do the trick.

2 Princess Blobette loves diamonds, so it's lucky you found these gems in the hallway near the Throne Room. Two of the gems are easy pickings, but reaching the third requires *cool* thinking.

3 Getting on top of this machine isn't difficult, but you can't reach the power switch alone. Use the ketchup jellybeans to get Blob by your side, then find a shape that can somehow knock that switch to the off position.

4 It doesn't take long to figure out that a wrench in those gears would bring the machinery to a halt, but tossing it into the right place isn't so easy.

Few live to finish this game.



Shoot fast, or Basher's fist will rearrange your face.

You'll face Androboy the Hunter whose box is bigger than his bite.

Fight hard or the Tornado parasites will spin you to death.

The whole thing started when you invented this radical formula that turns men into supermen. And someone stole it. You'll have to fight some very deadly interplanetary characters to get it back. And that's just for starters in Street Fighter, one of the toughest games for Nintendo ever. Play it today. You might even live to tell about it. Maybe.

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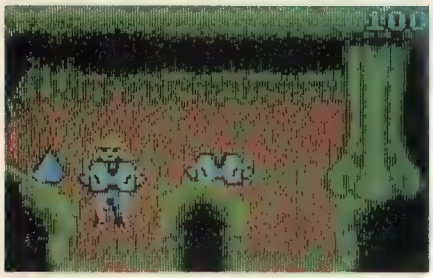
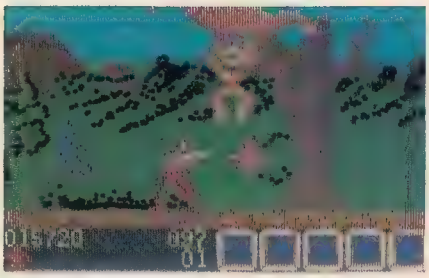


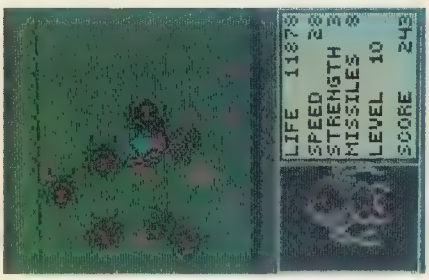
After dinner, you can always battle maggots, blood-flies and drools in the dangerous 8 player game – **SLIME WORLD.**



RYGAR, *the 2 player arcade hit that pits you against ferocious beasts, hideous demons or worse, your best friend.*

PAPERBOY. *Fling papers at non-subscribers, race your bicycle on people's lawns— in other words, the ultimate afterschool job.*

RAMPAGE. *Become a 60 ft. beast, demolish buildings and eat tanks as an army attempts to destroy you. Up to 4 players can take part in the destruction.*



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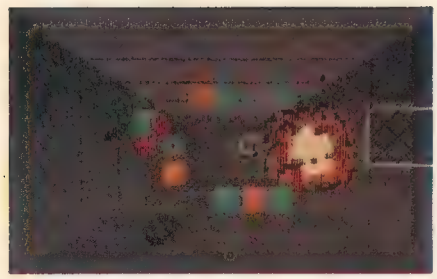
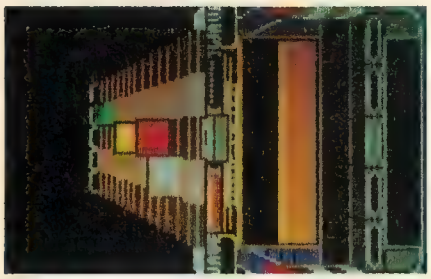


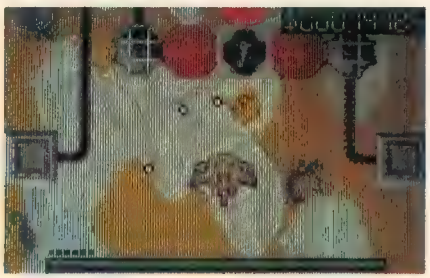
ROBO SQUASH. *The ultimate paddle game. The goal is to squash the enemy and line up four globes in a row to win. But be careful, three splats and you're out.*

XENOPHOBE. *Trapped in a space station, you must destroy the aliens. Side-scrolling adventure for up to 4 players.*



KLAX. *Maneuver your platform. Catch the falling bricks. Stack 'em for points. And try to do it all before your dad asks to borrow it.*

ROAD BLASTER. *Drive and avoid mines, exploding towers and enemy vehicles for points and make it through 50 levels. Great to play in the back of the car.*



It's a galactic shoot out between you and aliens in the 4 player game **ZARLOR MERCENARY.** *Your only hope is to kill them all or break for lunch.*

Help **MS. PACMAN** *escape the marauding ghosts by guiding her through multiple mazes gobbling up dots, energizers, fruits and pretzels.*

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ATARI LYNX

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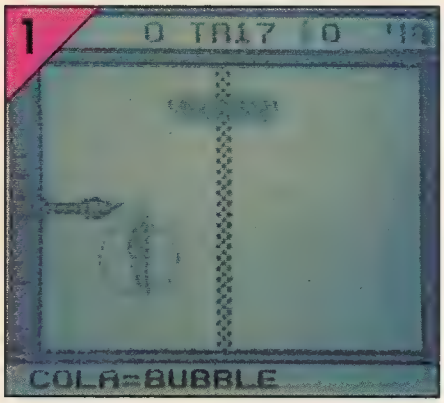
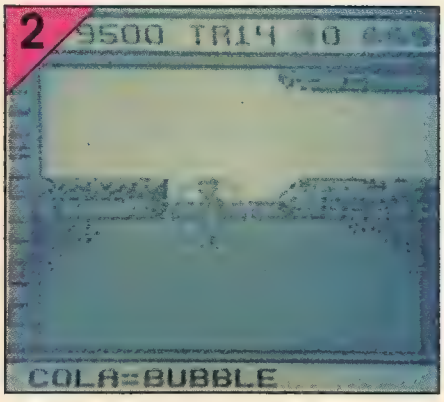
GAME BOY PLAYERS

The entire game takes place in a castle on the planet Blobolonia. This time around, a character known as the Antagonistic Alchemist is trying to overthrow the Evil Emperor, who was turned good by a megadose of vitamins in *A Boy and His Blob*. As part of his plan, the Antagonistic Alchemist has seized and caged Princess Blobette, and has locked Blob and the boy in one of the castle's towers. Our heroes' job is clear: to escape from the tower, then find and free Princess Blobette.



As in the first game, you play the young Earth boy and are given a supply of variously flavored jellybeans for changing Blob into useful shapes. Along the way, you can find extra jellybeans as well as new flavors. After figuring out how to escape the tower, you have free run of the castle in your search for Princess Blobette. If you find and free her, you still have to follow her to get to the game's conclusion.



The obstacles and problems you must overcome in *The Rescue of Princess Blobette* are similar to those in *A Boy and His Blob*. If you liked the first game's emphasis on experimentation and creativity, you should find this game just as much fun.

One of the nice things about *The Rescue of Princess Blobette* is that almost every problem has more than one solution. Two different players could easily come up with different ways of getting past many of the obstacles, and that gives the game a lot of variety. When you come to a deep shaft in the castle walls, for example, do you make your descent with the umbrella or the cola bubble? Each method *might* work, but if you experiment, you'll find that one method *always* works.

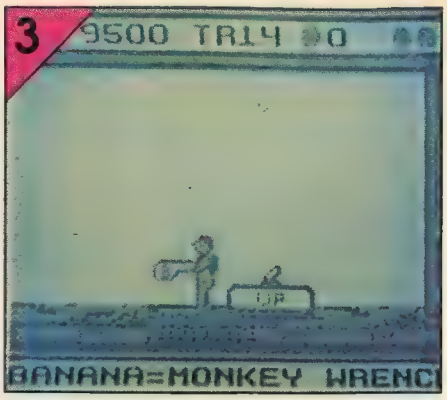
1 There are several ways to get to the bottom of the tunnel. If you use the bubble, stay away from the middle of the shaft.

2 Underwater exploration can take you to parts of the castle you normally couldn't reach. Look for a switch to reverse the platforms in the tunnel — it's the shortest way back upstairs.

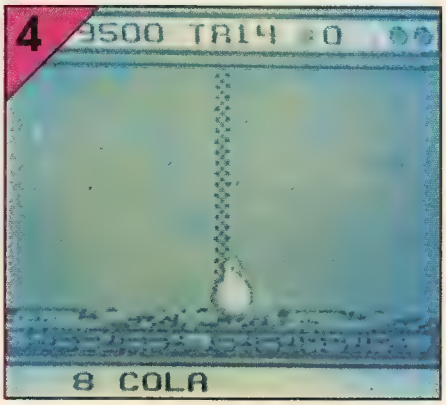
3 The instructions say you always need to use Blob to turn off machinery, but just running past this lever will change its setting.

4 You could use a valuable ketchup jellybean to retrieve Blob from his watery trap, or you could take advantage of the fact that hummingbirds can fly underwater on Blobolonia.

There are a few quirks in controlling your character that take some getting used to. Whenever you enter a new screen, for instance, Blob (who's trailing behind you) will invariably run into you and push you ahead. So if you walk to a ledge, watch out — Blob will accidentally knock you off every time. Moving a short distance can also be tricky, because your character tends to take more than one step, even if you press the directional pad for just a split second. But you'll get the hang of it before too long.



Sometimes Blob needs to be in a particular spot before being changed into an object, and getting him to stop in the right place can be a bit frustrating. There's an easy way around this, though — change Blob into a shape that can be carried, then set him down exactly where he needs to be. Just make sure you save a couple of jellybeans in every flavor.



The graphics in *Blobette* aren't incredibly detailed, but there's no need for them to be. All of the objects in the game are easily recognizable, and the clean, uncluttered look of each screen helps you keep your mind on what you're doing. The tasteful use of graphics gives the game the look and feel of its NES forerunner — a real com-

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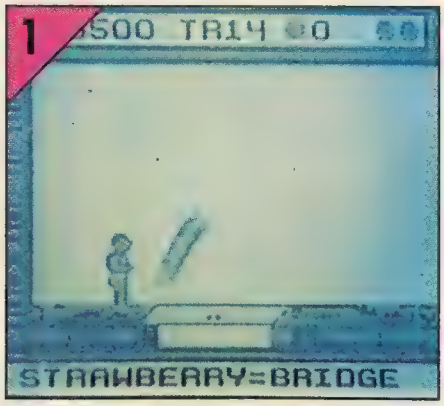
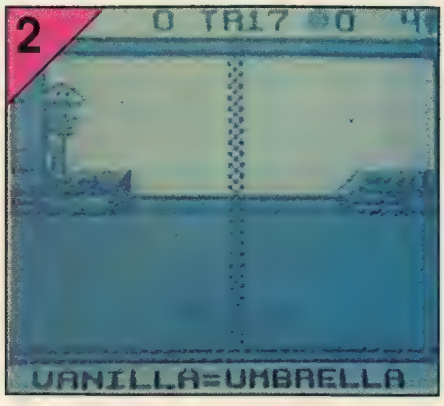
GAME BOY PLAYERS

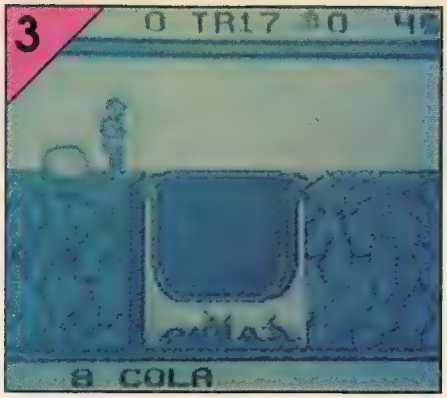
pliment for any game adapted for the Game Boy.

The animation hasn't suffered in the translation, either. The Earth boy dashes smoothly through the castle, while Blob bounces happily along behind him. If you lose a life, you can even see a frown appear on Blob's face.

So far, so good. However, so much care and attention went into re-creating the wonderful game play of *A Boy and His Blob* that a few other areas of *The Rescue of Princess Blobette* seem to have been rushed. For example, take the damsel-in-distress plot. It's a fairly common storyline in videogames, and there's nothing *wrong* with it, but it's not as endearing and original as the story in *A Boy and His Blob*.







For the most part, *Blobette* has a good variety of obstacles and problems to overcome. After playing the game, however, it turned out that several screens yielded lots of extra points, but nothing that was needed to finish the game. If you were trying to top someone else's score, these rooms would be important — but there's neither a two-player mode nor anyplace to record a high score.

Of course, you have to finish the game before you realize which rooms aren't necessary. Hiding crucial items in those rooms or making it necessary to go through them to rescue the Princess would increase the challenge, especially for players who are more intent on solving problems than on scoring points.

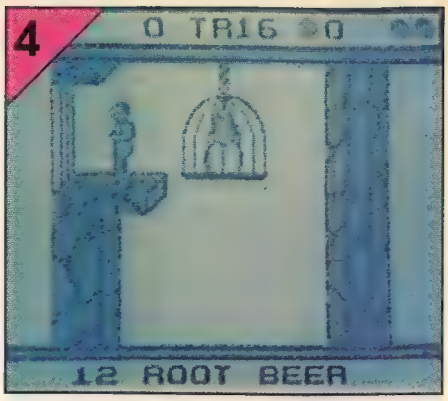
1 After turning Blob into a bridge, study the pattern of this floating serpent before attempting to cross.

2 Getting onto the moving platforms is difficult. Using an umbrella, you could try to dash onto a platform as it rises — but there's actually more than one solution.

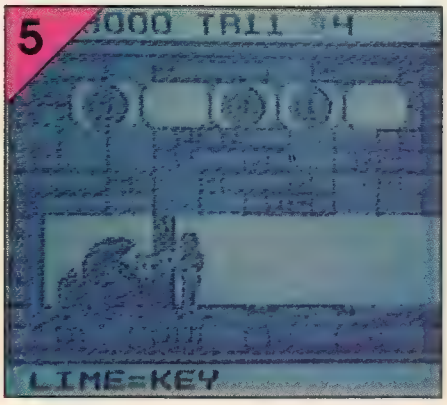
3 This mighty cauldron is too hot to cross on a bridge, but if you figured out how to extinguish the torch, you won't have any problem here.

4 You've found the princess, but freeing her is another problem. Maybe Blob can free her from her cage.

5 There's a lot of money behind these doors. Your keys don't seem to fit the lock, but by now you must realize there's more than one way to get into a room.



Also, the game's final sequence — in which you try to find Princess Blobette, who runs away after you open her cage — is an anticlimax. It's possible that your search could last awhile, but it's just as likely you'll find her within a minute of setting her free. And the Antagonistic Alchemist, who is to blame for the whole mess, is nowhere to be seen.



But these are minor points. Taken as a whole, *The Rescue of Princess Blobette* is an absorbing game that retains almost all the appeal of its predecessor. Finding Princess Blobette may not be a huge challenge for experienced gamers, but intermediate and beginning Game Boy players should find it rewarding and fun.

GP

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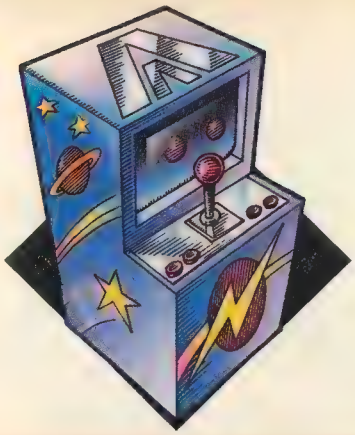


ARCADE ACTION

Race Drivin'

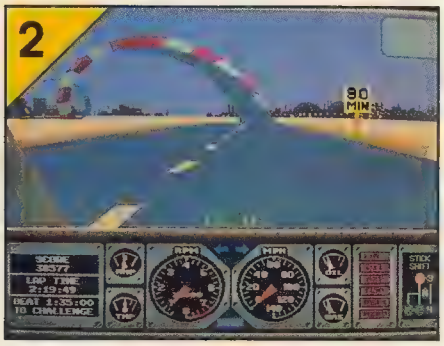
Scott Wolf

The empire strikes back. The Atari empire, that is. Not content with having produced *Hard Drivin'* — the finest race-car simulation in the universe — Atari Games has released *Race Drivin'*, a sequel that blows the doors off the original.

Race Drivin' offers four tracks to choose from: the original Stunt and Speed Tracks, plus two completely new courses, the Autocross and the Super Stunt Track. You also have your choice of four cars:

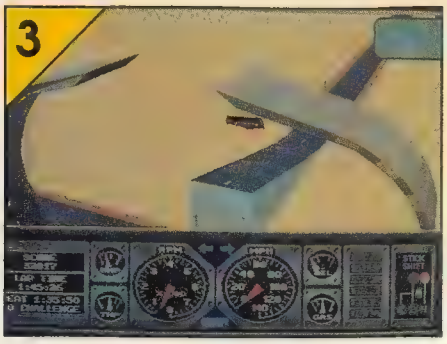
the two Sportster models from *Hard Drivin'*; a snazzy top-down Roadster, whose handling outperforms its horsepower; and the Speedster, an all-out neck-snapper. Only the Sportster is available with an automatic transmission, but trust me, you'll want the manual trans.

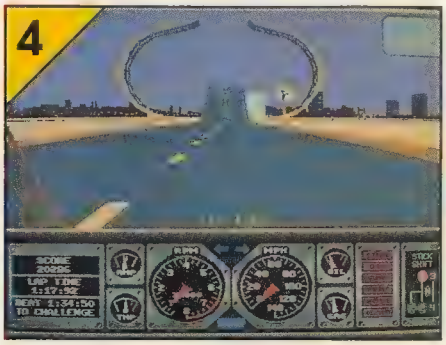
The Autocross is a deceptively simple course. Although it's basically a D-shaped track, it has so many little twists and turns that you'll rarely get out of second gear.



After your first lap, you'll face an interesting new opponent: an image of yourself (rendered in wireframe graphics) that duplicates your previous best lap. A dusty-brown desert landscape gives this track a suitably gritty appeal.

The Super Stunt Track is where *Race Drivin'* really shines. Twice as long as the original Stunt Track and twice as difficult, the Super Stunt Track is a wild roller-coaster ride with you at the controls. You'll find yourself spending almost as much time in the air as on the road. After zooming up and down a steep mountainside (watch out for those cows!), you'll pass a roadside diner, which is where the fun really starts. A huge vertical loop followed by two corkscrew loops lead to a hill that's practically 90 degrees straight up!





Watch your speed on the way down, because at the bottom of this monster is a sharp turn leading into a tunnel. And inside the tunnel is a still-smoking car-truck-train wreck. Experienced *S.T.U.N. Runner* players will know how to avoid this mess by driving on the tunnel wall.

Other amazing options in *Race Drivin'* let you first race a computer-controlled car, then race *yourself* in the computer's car. And by linking together a pair of *Race Drivin'* cabinets, you can compete against another human.

It just doesn't get any better than this — not yet, anyway.

GP

1 *Race Drivin'* gives you a bird's-eye view of each track so you can scope out the obstacles before dropping your quarters.

2 These double corkscrew loops are one of the most harrowing features of the Super Stunt Track.

3 Instant replays let you observe your most spectacular crashes from afar. This driver didn't quite make the upside-down loop jump.

4 A conventional ramp jump crosses the upside-down loop jump.

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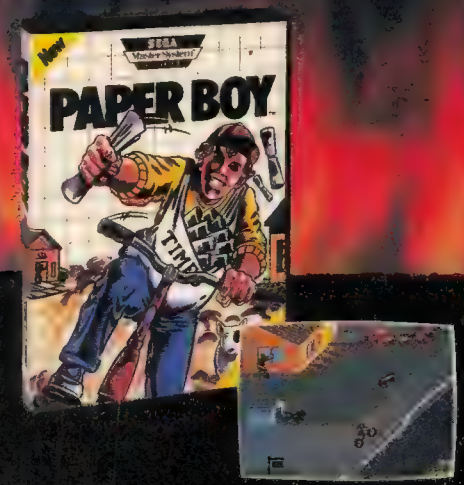

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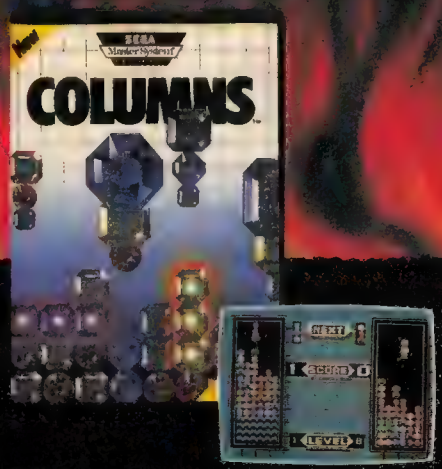

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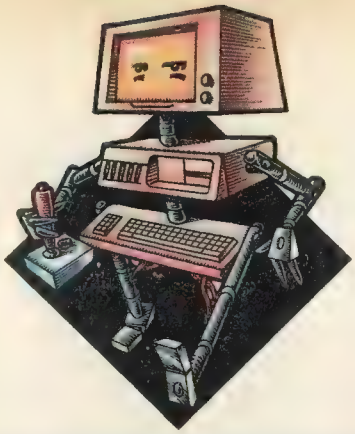
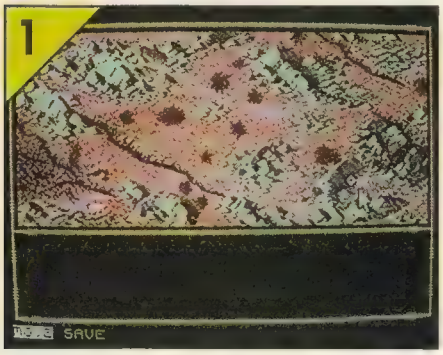


PC PLAYERS

Fantasy and Sci-Fi

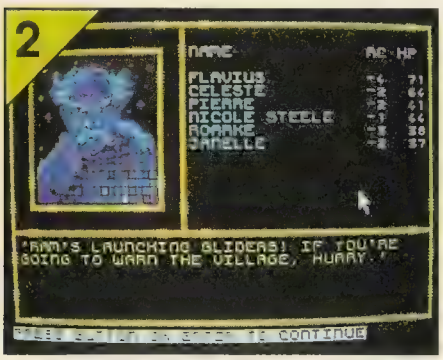
Neil Randall

If you're a science-fiction or fantasy role-playing buff, two new PC games will be of great interest to you. The first is a sci-fi adaptation of the popular *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons* series from Strategic Simulations (SSI). The second game is (in my opinion) the first truly



successful adaptation of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*.

Buck Rogers in the 25th Century, Volume 1: Countdown to Doomsday is the first *AD&D* sci-fi game from SSI. It places you in the fanciful world of Buck Rogers, the subject of a recent non-computer role-playing game from TSR, the makers of *Dungeons and Dragons*. In *Countdown to Doomsday*, you par-

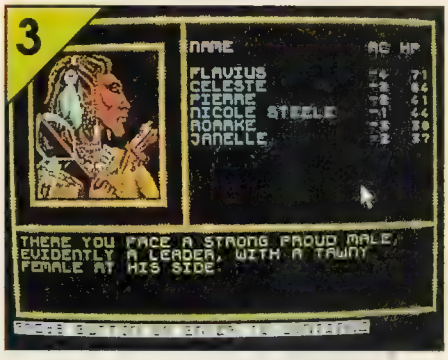


ticipate in several adventures in which Buck Rogers plays a part, even though you don't interact with the big guy on anything more than a fleeting basis.

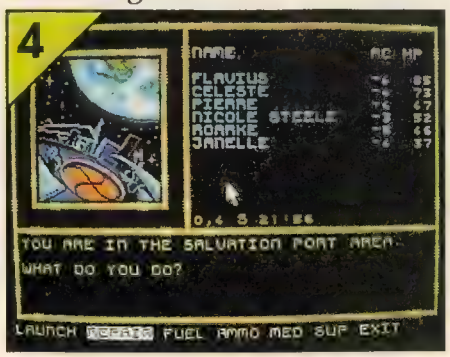
Players of SSI's other *AD&D* games (*Pool of Radiance*, *Curse of the Azure Bonds*, *Champions of Krynn*, and *Secret of the Silver Blades*) should be able to discard their armor and swords and switch to spacesuits and lasers with a great deal of ease.

Countdown to Doomsday is nothing more — and nothing less — than a sci-fi version of these games. I should emphasize "nothing less," because the previous *AD&D* games have developed a solid, workable playing system, and *Countdown to Doomsday* uses that system well.

Like the other *AD&D* titles, *Countdown to Doomsday* features a party of adventurers pitted against an evil force. To finish the game, you must pursue a series of missions that seem only partially related. As you make your way through adventures on Mercury, Venus, and in the asteroid belt, you'll find out where you must go and what you must do once you're there. If you wish, you can head for the climactic battle on Mars before completing the other adventures, but you'll find some things along the way that will make your job a great deal easier.



Each member of your party has certain skills — both career skills and individual skills. Many of these skills are performed automatically, without your guidance. As the adventurers gain experience, they can rise in levels, learning new skills and enhancing the ones they already have. They can find weapons, armor, and other items along the way, or they can buy (and sell) items at the planetary bases. Each time they complete a new mission, they can head to Earth and find out where to go next.



1 *Buck Rogers: Countdown to Doomsday*: The surface of Mars looks imposing. The arrow points to your location and that of a neighboring village.

2 Scot.dos, your ever-helpful computer companion, appears on the screen and issues a warning. If you're late, RAM will win this village.

3 Tuskan, the leader of the desert runners, greets the party. He's frightening, but don't back down.

4 In port you can refuel, replenish your ammunition, repair your ship, and pick up medical supplies. Only on Salvation is it all free.

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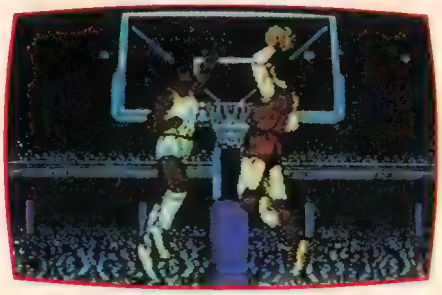

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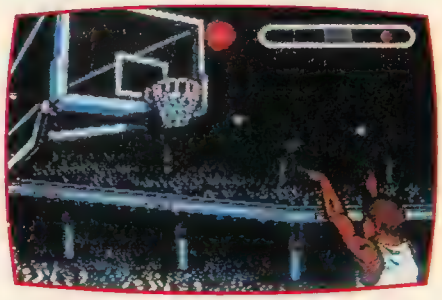

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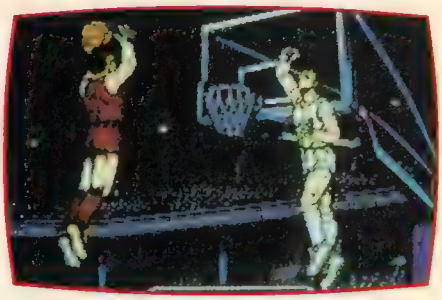

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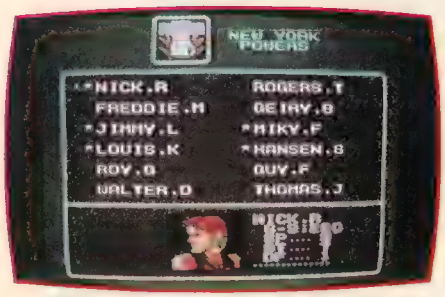
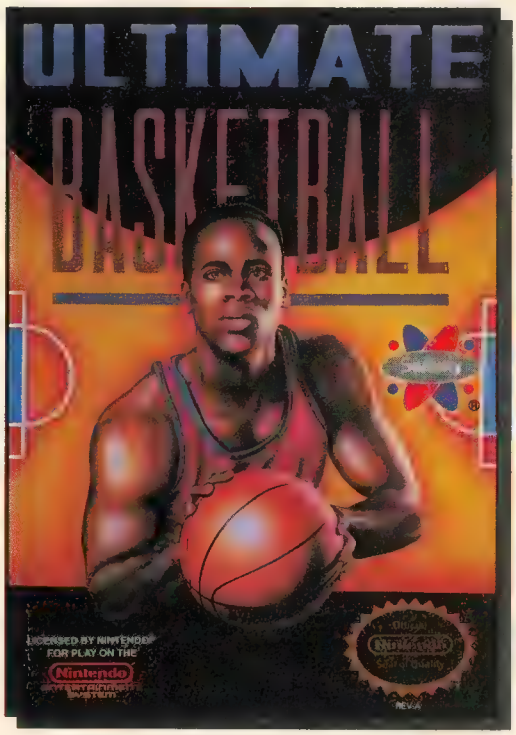


Pick your starting line-up

Team up with a friend against the computer



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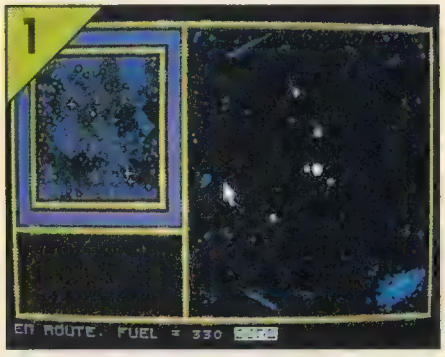
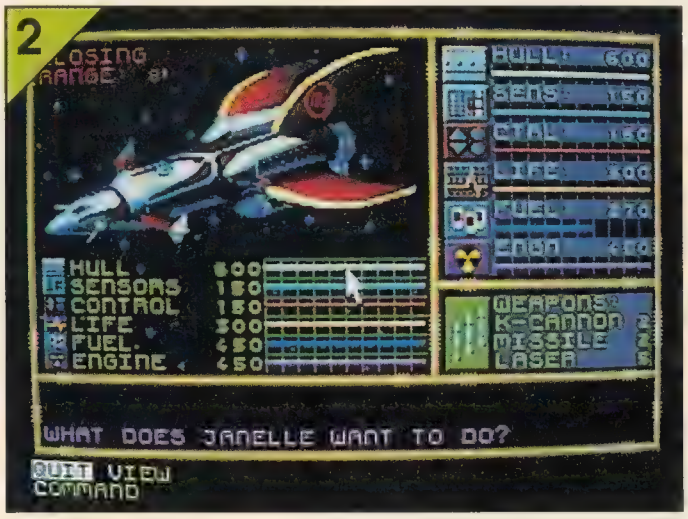
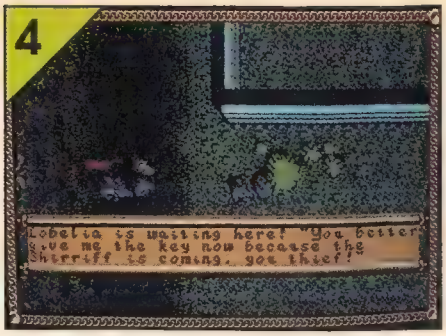
PC PLAYERS

The combat system is the heart of *AD&D* games, and it's no less important here. The same tactical display appears, although most of the weapons in *Countdown to Doomsday* tend to be missiles. Yes, you can wield a Martian mono sword or even a lowly dagger in combat, but a plasma thrower, dazzle grenade, or rocket pistol is usually more effective. So, too, is the Martian battle armor, but you'll have to wait a long time before finding any. Effective battle tactics rely heavily on being able to master zero-gravity situations, so be sure to advance your adventurers' skills in this area.

Ship-to-ship space combat is the only major addition to the *AD&D* system. Firing weapons at other spacecraft is easy to do (though it demands considerable strategy), and you have the option of ramming and boarding an enemy vessel as well. If you tangle with a light cruiser or a pirate vessel, you should be able to win. But if you take on a medium or heavy enemy cruiser, be prepared to get blasted out of space.







1 The solar system screen shows your ship's position as well as possible destinations. The asteroid belt has several points of interest.

2 The space combat screen offers a gorgeous view of the enemy ship. Gauges show how much damage your ship and the enemy's have sustained.

3 The tactical combat screen gives you control over every member of the party, or you can let the computer handle them by choosing the Quick option.

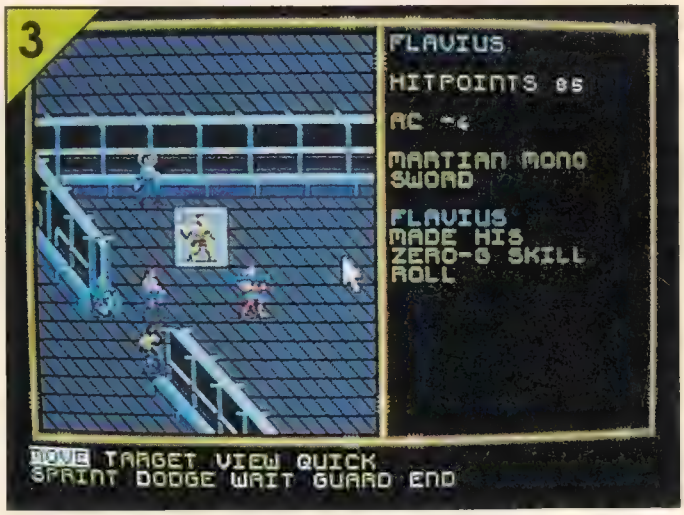
4 *The Lord of the Rings*: Good old Lobelia wants the key to your house, the one she's just bought. Might as well give it to her, and get her out of your hair.

The Lord of the Rings

Interplay's *The Lord of the Rings* (Volume 1) is certainly not the first attempt at capturing the Tolkien novels in computer-game form. However, I think it's the first *successful* attempt — so successful, in fact, that there's no real point in looking any further.

Unless your interest in the novels is the epic battles between the good and evil armies, this game will do more than satisfy your yearning for Middle Earth. It gives you Frodo, it gives you Sam, and it takes you to the places that so many of us know as well as our hometowns.

Actually, it does even more. The problem with re-creating the Tolkien trilogy is that so many people know the books so well. No Tol-kien fan is going to put up with a game that ignores such essential elements as the Shire, Buckland, the Old Forest, the Barrow-downs, Weathertop, Bree, and Rivendell, or that lets you go around these places without going through them. And who would



want a Middle Earth game without Merry, Pippin, Farmer Maggot, Rose Cotton, Tom Bombadil, Old Man Willow, Gildor the elf, and, of course, Gandalf?

But — and this is an important point — nor does anyone want a game that slavishly reproduces the novel, with nothing added or changed. There has to be *something* to do, after all, or you might as well just reread the books.

Interplay's version of *The Lord of the Rings* includes all of those familiar names and places. And to keep things interesting, it offers new quests that aren't found in the books.

For instance, in the woods east of Bag End (the hobbit home where both the novel and the game begin), two children have been lost. If you talk to the strange creature hanging around the Green Dragon Inn, you'll also learn about a lost dwarf adventurer. Head to the woods, find some ruins, then locate a cave. You'll be attacked by wolves and spiders, but there's much to be gained.

You'll discover similar quests in the Barrow-downs near the house of Tom Bombadil — which the books hint at but don't reveal.

In other words, you must complete the main quest as outlined in the Tolkien books, but you have other tasks to perform, too. These tasks force you to explore the Shire and its surrounding territory, and they also keep you somewhat off guard.

2
Shards of broken smoking pipes lie among piles of mishandled library books. A book is open on a table.
"Where is my pipe!" a ghost shouts. As you approach the shelves, the ghost pelts you with pipe shards.
You cannot touch these books.

The game's player interface is a snap. Press the space bar to make the menu icons appear. Select the talk icon to recruit or dismiss members of your party, or to question other characters. Use the magic wand icon to cast spells, or the scholar icon to use specialized skills.

Besides selecting icons, the game involves moving the party around a map which occupies the full screen. The overhead view is well-rendered, especially the adventurers. The hobbits look like Tolkien meant hobbits to look, and from above you can even tell that their feet are large and bare — a nice touch.

1 Esmerelda doesn't want to let you into Brandy Hall, but Sam has a skill that will help you. Just soften her up a bit.

2 There's a ghost in Brandy Hall who wants nothing more than a good pipe. Find it for him, and you'll get all sorts of vital information.

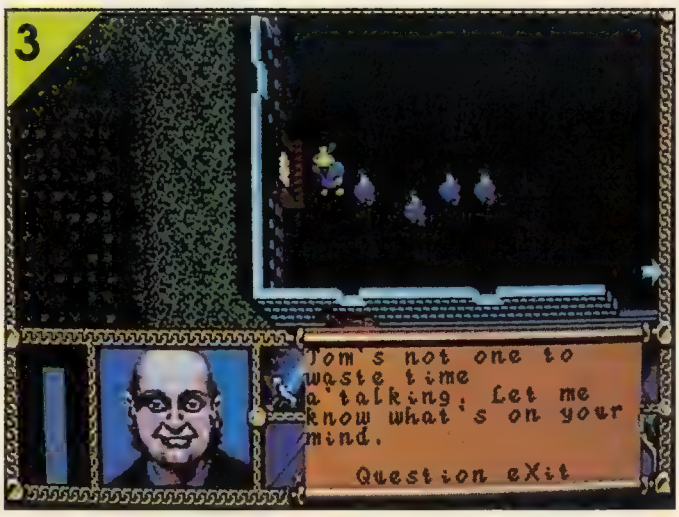
3 In the basement of this building, you can find the key to the Old Forest gate.

4 The house of Tom Bombadil, one of the highlights of the book, is found in the game as well. Go upstairs and find Goldberry; she has much to offer.

Volume 1 takes the party from the Shire as far as Rivendell. Volume 2, due next year, will continue the quest to destroy the One Ring. Volume 3, like the third book in the trilogy, will deal with the final battles and the quest for Mount Doom.

Real Tolkien. Real Middle Earth. At last!

GP



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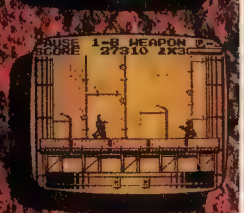

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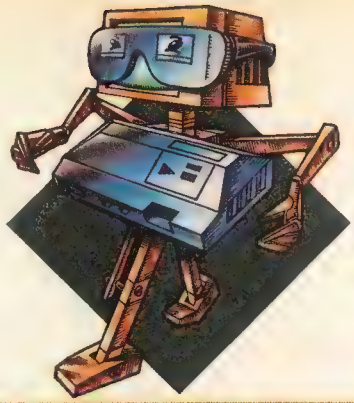


SEGA PLAYERS

Hard Drivin': The First Simulator

Matthew A. Firme

Driving or flying games such as *Super Monaco GP* and *Air Diver* can give you some idea of what it's like to drive at over 200 miles an hour, or to pilot a jet fighter. But neither game is a true *simulator*.

In a true simulator, you'd be able to spin your racer around and drive into oncoming traffic. You'd be able to turn tail and flee the enemy jet planes, or even nose-dive into the ground. A true

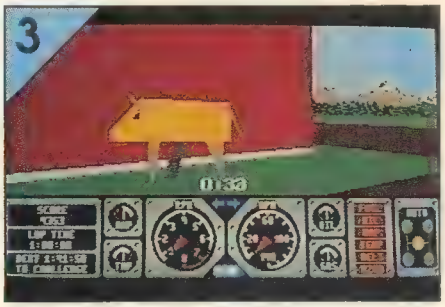
simulator lets you do almost anything in your video-vehicle that you could do in a real one.

But this kind of freedom requires complex programming. It also requires more control functions than the two buttons on a Master System control pad offer. And although it's technically possible to design a true simulator for an eight-bit game machine, many game companies feel that the average videogame player just isn't ready for the depth and complexity of a simulator.

So instead, we get "track" games, such as *Air Diver* and *Super Monaco GP*. In other words, the vehicle in the game seems to run on a narrow track, almost like a train. Even *Air Diver*, with its loops and rolls, limits your plane to a restricted pathway with slight allowances for steering left or right and up or down. It's like flying through a tube.

But now there's a new Genesis game that comes closer to being a real simulator than any other home videogame — Tengen's *Hard Drivin'*, adapted from Atari's arcade hit.

Hard Drivin' is a stunning car-racing game. You can choose either of two courses, the Stunt Track or the Speed Track. The Stunt Track is studded with ramps, banked turns, and even a loop. The Speed Track is built for fast driving — there are more straightaways, and the turns are more gradual.



But what really sets *Hard Drivin'* apart from other racing games is the degree of control you have. You can actually turn your car off the track and drive over land, although you'll be returned to the track if you stay off-road for more than ten seconds. In the arcade version, this allowed you to take illegal shortcuts. But be careful when exploring — in some places there are invisible barriers that prevent you from straying too far. If you hit one, your car explodes.

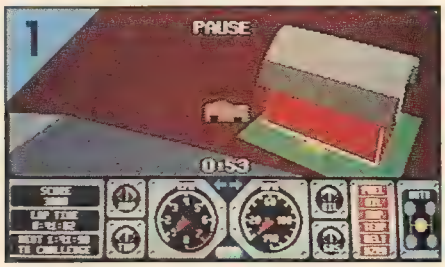
With a little practice, you can venture pretty far off the beaten path in the time allowed. As you wander around, you'll notice that the bridges, road signs, and road-

1 The options screen in *Hard Drivin'* lets you tailor the game to your tastes. In practice mode, you aren't timed and can take as much time as you like driving around the track.

2 You can race the Speed Track or the Stunt Track in *Hard Drivin'*. The two tracks are intertwined, and you can try the second when you finish the first.

3 One of the first sights you'll see on the Stunt Track in *Hard Drivin'* is this cow, grazing beside a barn. If you hit the cow, it cries "Mooo!"

SEGA PLAYERS



side features are all three-dimensional. You can drive completely around a house, for instance, and view it from every angle.

When you hit a road sign (you'll probably do this a lot, just for fun), it bends forward and stays bent. Even if you drive completely around the track and return to the sign, or turn around and drive the wrong way until you come back to the sign, it will still be bent. All this makes *Hard Drivin'* seem much more substantial, as if you really are driving through a tangible, computer-generated landscape.

The ten-second time limit for off-road driving and the hidden barriers do impose some restrictions on your freedom, of course. Also, when you're playing in normal mode — competing against other drivers for the best time — you're required to pass certain checkpoints in a given time period. But *Hard Drivin'* has a practice mode, freeing you from timed competition. As long as you stay on the road, or at least return to it every ten seconds, you can explore at your leisure.

Another neat feature carried over from the arcade version is the instant replay. After you crash your car in an accident, you can observe the crack-up from a point of view just above the road. You may find yourself purposely smashing your car into other traffic or ramming bridge abutments just to watch the replays.

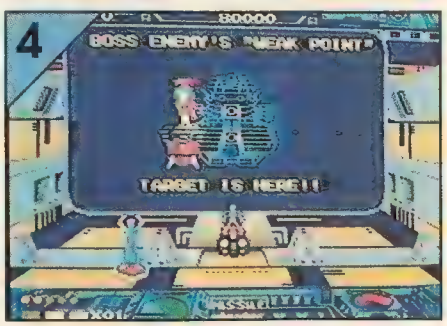
Unfortunately, *Hard Drivin'* doesn't have the best graphics we've seen in a racing game, and the animation isn't the smoothest, either. But no other home videogame comes as close to being a true simulator. *Hard Drivin'* gets off to a good start, and we can only hope for more.

Burning Force and *Ishido*

The latest game from Namco, *Burning Force*, is certainly no simulator. But it is a fast-forward, colorful shooter in the tradition of *Space Harrier*.

You play the role of Hiromi, a female student at Earth University who hopes to become a space pilot. As the game begins, you're starting the first day of a five-day test to determine whether you are skilled enough to realize your dream. If you pass the test, you'll earn the chance to fly a deep-space mission for your pilot's license.

As in *Space Harrier*, you play from a point of view just behind Hiromi as she hurtles toward various enemies and obstacles. In some



1 The instant replay feature in *Hard Drivin'* lets you relive this collision with the barn.

2 The loop in *Hard Drivin'* can be very tricky to maneuver successfully. Too fast, and you'll wreck on the way out. Too slow, and you'll fall out of the loop.

3 In the first two stages of each day's testing in *Burning Force*, Hiromi rides an air bike equipped with many different weapons and missiles.

4 In the third stage of each day's testing in *Burning Force*, you'll fly a space plane against that day's boss.

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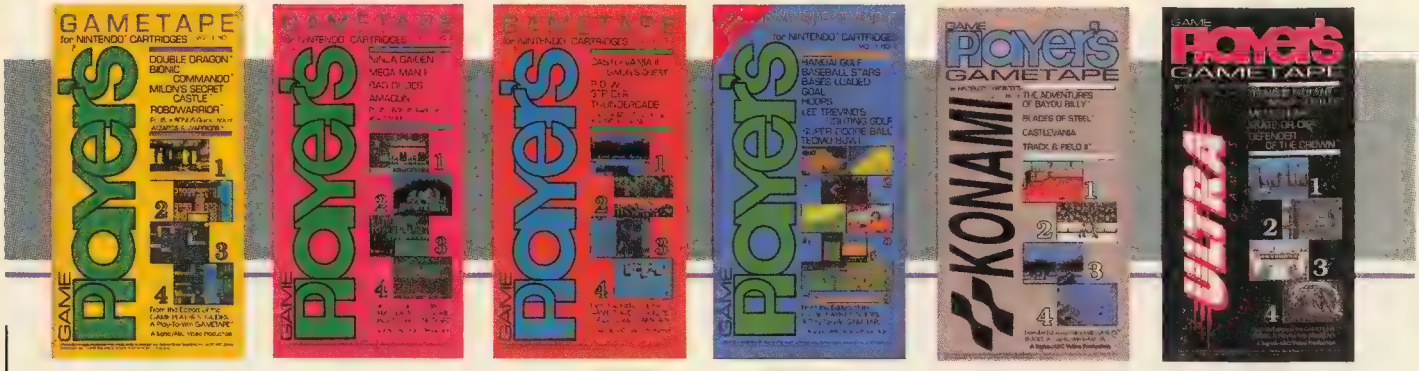

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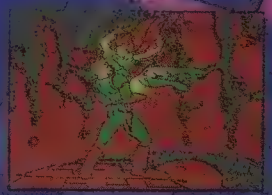

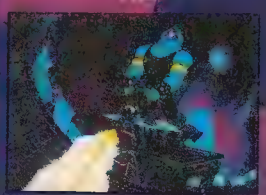

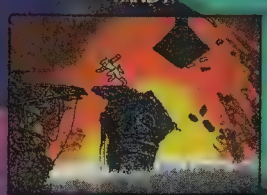

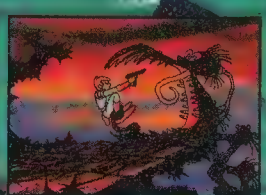

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Ishido is a puzzle game that joins other Genesis puzzlers such as *Klax*, *Columns*, and *Shove It!: The Warehouse Game*.

Ishido is said to be based on a very ancient game once played by people all around the world. Legend has it that the game was rediscovered by a Taoist priest studying archaeological data, and that the priest introduced the game to modern players.

Reflecting its world-wide roots, *Ishido* offers a choice of seven different boards and sets of playing pieces. The seven sets are labeled Gemstones, Alchemy, Native Americans, Egypt, China, Stonehenge, and Japan.

stages, Hiromi rides an air bike which can move only left or right on the ground, unless she ramps into the air to grab floating power-ups. In other stages, namely the third and fourth scenes of each day's testing, Hiromi controls a space plane which can fly in all directions.

Burning Force contains few surprises. The story is a bit different, but the action and graphics will be familiar to most game players, particularly those who've played *Space Harrier*. But if you crave the kind of action that *Burning Force* has to offer, you won't be disappointed.

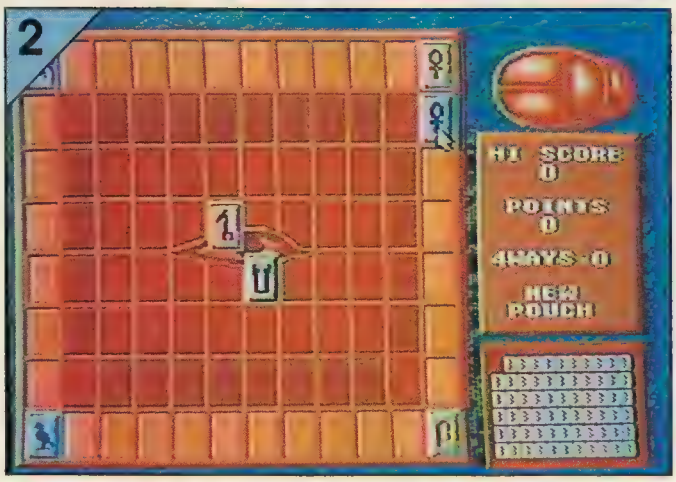
Another new Genesis game on the way is *Ishido: The Way of Stones*. It's the first Genesis title from Accolade, a well-known maker of computer games.

1 After each boss stage in *Burning Force*, you'll fly along a path of bonus items.

2 *Ishido* lets you choose from seven different playing sets. This one reflects Egyptian influence.

3 Your goal in *Ishido* is to place all of your stones on the board. Each stone must be placed next to another stone with the same symbol or color.

4 Options in *Ishido* let you see the stones you have remaining, and where each stone can be placed.



More New Titles

Hard Drivin', *Burning Force*, and *Ishido* should be available in November. Here are some more releases to look for in coming months.

In December, watch for *Mondu's Fight Palace* from Activision, *TechnoCop* from Razor Soft, *Super Volleyball* from Video System, *Sword of Sodan* from Electronic Arts, *Grenada* from Renovation, and *Shadow Blasters* from Sage's Creation.

January will bring *Aero Blasters* from Kaneko, *Cross Fire* from Kyugo Trading Company, *Junction* from Micronet, *Bimini Run* from Nuvision, *Ka-ge-ki* from Sage's Creation, and *Dando* from Treco.

February should see *Beanball Benny* from Nuvision and *Berlin Wall* from Kaneko. In March, look for *RBI Baseball 2* from Tengen and *Task Force Harrier* from Treco.

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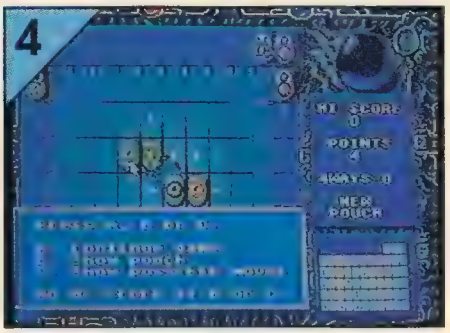

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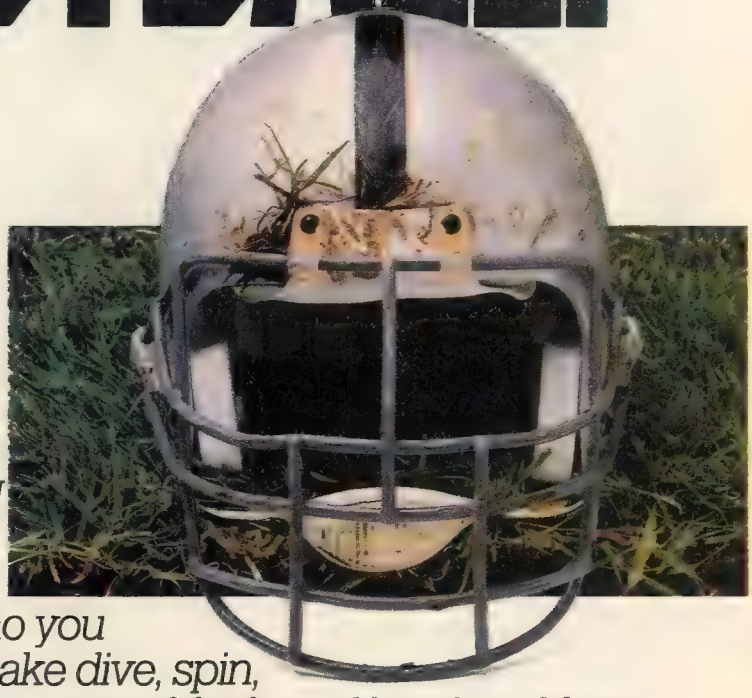

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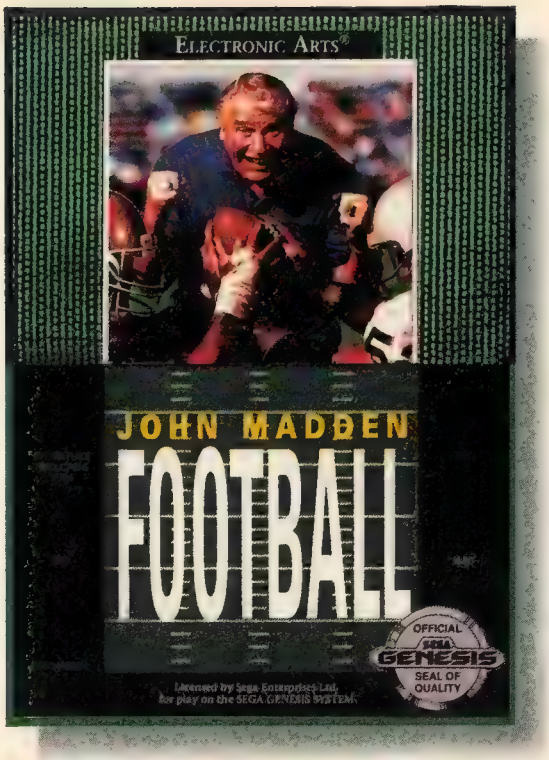

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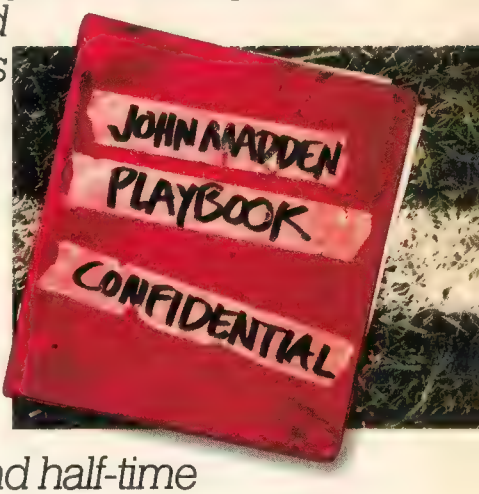
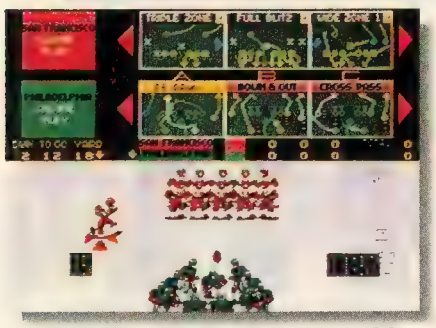
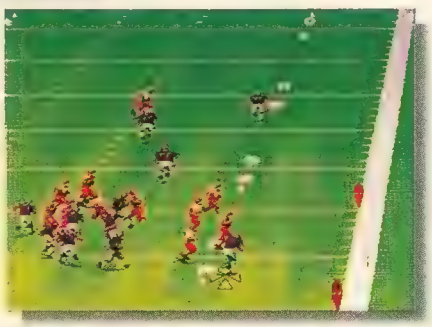
So everything's true to the game itself. Bone-jarring sounds of the trenches. Animation that will flatten you. Intense pressure. And half-time highlights and stats.





Make the right call from over 100 different plays. Keep the weather in mind and you'll put the game on ice.



Totally All-Pro moves that you control. Including spins, dives, jumps, and an end zone touchdown dance.

Now it can be Super Sunday any day of the week.

All the players have real attributes. You get guys with better hands. Guys who are faster. Even special short yardage units.

As the big man himself says, "Some guys aren't mudders. Some guys can't hold a block on grass. That's real football. That's in the game." Think you can find a harder hitting football game? Get real.

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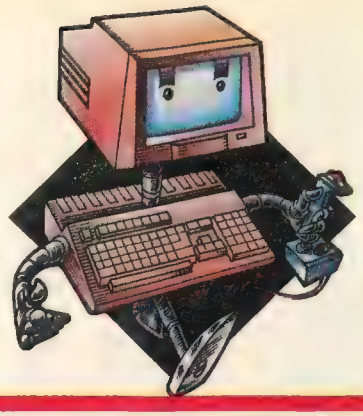


AMIGA PLAYERS

Wings

Sheldon Leemon

People have wanted to fly ever since they first noticed birds in the sky, so it's not surprising that the first flight simulator game appeared about ten minutes after the invention of computer graphics. Today, flight simulators are among the most popular kinds of games on the Amiga, as evidenced by the recent outbreak of such specialized programs as *Their Finest Hour: The Battle of Britain* (historical drama), *Strike Aces* (bombing missions), *Blue Angels* (formation stunt flying), and *A-10 Tank Killer* (modern anti-tank combat).

That's why it was only a matter of time before the folks at Cinemaware focused their unique talents on the subject. The result is *Wings*, a lively mix of aerial combat sequences and arcade-style action with an important element that's missing in most other flight simulators: a believable plot that builds as the game progresses.

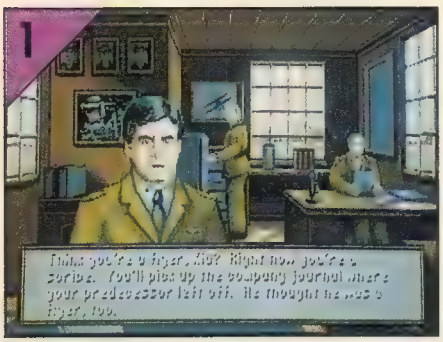
Wings follows the adventures of the 56th Aerosquadron during the First World War. One big advantage of simulating this early period of aviation is that the aircraft are quite simple to operate. *Wings* is definitely not one of those games in which you must attend flight school before you can figure out how to take off. In fact, the aerial combat scenes begin and end in the air, so you never have to take off or land at all.

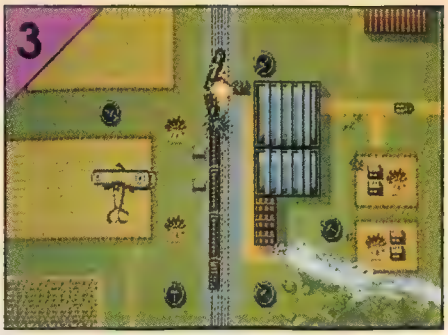
Unlike modern jet-fighter simulators in which the cockpit controls look like something from the starship *Enterprise*, all the controls you need to fly the planes in this game fit easily on your joystick. You twist the stick to climb, dive, and bank, and you push the fire button to shoot the machine gun. Want to go faster? You'll have to dive toward the ground. With flying skills reduced to this basic level, strategy and technique become the key factors in your success as a combat pilot.

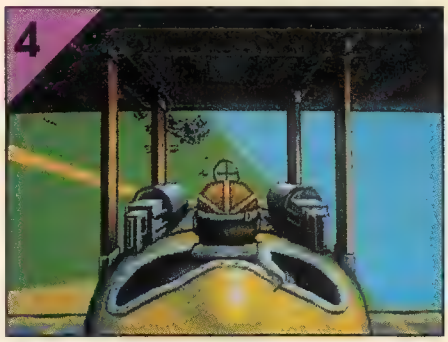
Wings isn't one of those games in which you have a limited number of lives, either. Each game lasts from March 1916 until the Armistice is signed in November 1918. If you don't want to fight the entire war at one sitting, you can save the game to disk at any point.

You begin as Waldo Barnstormer (or another character of your choice). If Waldo dies, another recruit takes his place. Each new pilot must qualify at flight school, a training mode in which you learn to master the basic skills of bombing, strafing, and shooting down observation balloons.

Once qualified, you start flying missions and keeping the squadron journal — a device that advances the plot and throws in a bit of history as well. The journal entries appear as text screens before each







1. Your commanding officer isn't exactly Mr. Congeniality.
2. Newspaper headlines help give you the big picture.
3. Between dogfights, you'll be dropping bombs on tempting targets, like this enemy train.
4. A German plane trails smoke as you close in for the kill.

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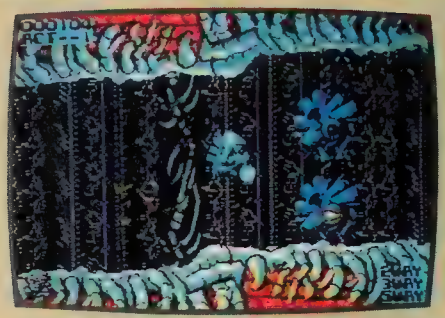

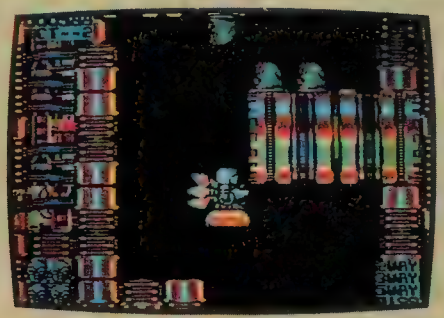

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AMIGA PLAYERS

1. Takeoffs are automatic, so sit back and enjoy the graphics.
2. You can't get killed during a strafing run, but ground fire can end your mission.
3. *Wings* lets you create your own characters. Successful missions increase your skill ratings.
4. After a brief salute for a fallen comrade, it's back to the skies.

mission. The missions are fairly short, and they vary from aerial combat and escort to defending your base or guarding your observation balloons.

The missions change over time. For example, you won't get any bombing missions until some bombs have been manufactured. Your opponents' skills change over time, too. Although the enemy pilots start as rookies, they vastly improve after a year or two of war.

Meanwhile, your skills improve as you successfully complete each mission. You are rated for flying, shooting, stamina, and mechanical skills. If you fail several missions in a row, you lose points, and your pilot may be dishonorably discharged.

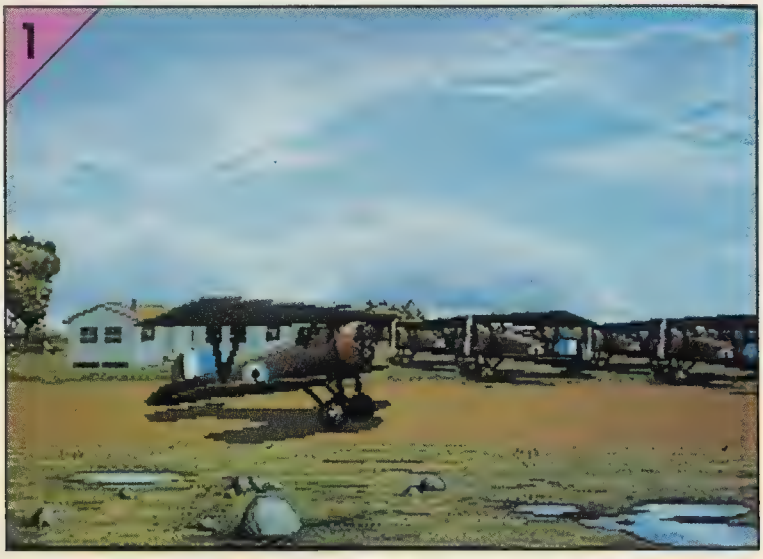
If you play the game straight through to Armistice Day (rather than starting over each time you play), you get a real feeling for the war. Pilots come and go, some doing better than others. The missions keep changing, and the journal entries let you know how the war is progressing. The sound effects and music lend even more realism. Overall, you experience the cinematic effect that Cinemaware aims for.

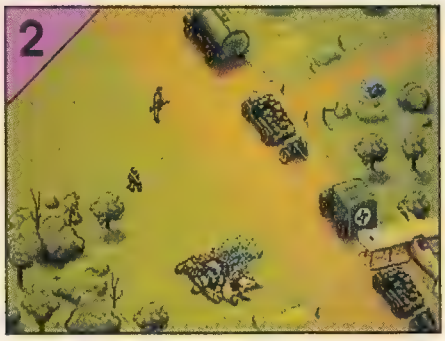
There's a good mix of game play as well. The flight sequences require some practice, but they're broken up by easier, arcade-style bombing and strafing missions. Sometimes you'll be out on patrol with several other planes, and sometimes with a single wingman. Bombing missions target buildings, bridges, and trains. No two sequences are exactly alike.

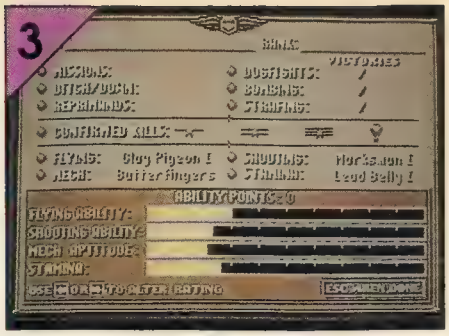
Wings comes with an excellent manual that provides some interesting historical background. It also offers advice on flying maneuvers and combat strategy. Although this material adds enjoyment, you can start playing right away without reading a lot of instructions. The only thing I didn't figure out just by playing is that the numeric keypad lets you switch views while flying. You can look sideways or backward, and even watch yourself get shot down.

Wings definitely has that special quality that turns "just one more game" into a lost weekend. Even if you're not a flight buff, it'll have you yearning to earn your wings.

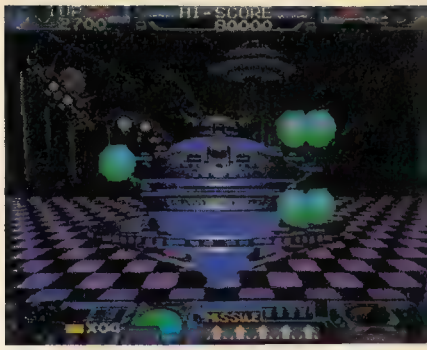
GP







Master The Skies



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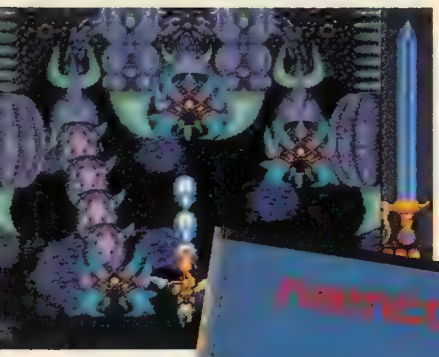

Ancient gods of Greece at war! Evil Typhon, lord of the underworld, has kidnapped lovely Artemis, the moon goddess. Apollo, the sun god, attempts a rescue astride the winged horse Pegasus. With your expert guidance, they soar through the sky and battle the likes of the snake-headed Medusa; and Charybdis, the sea monster. Extra fire power, lives, and speed will help in the final assault...but don't forget to grab Phelios, the Sword of Light, when it is offered.

"Great colorful graphics that will knock you out of your chair! Dazzling multi-moving graphic imagery and theme music... Exceptional!"
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Space combat at the Earth University. That's what you signed up to learn. Armored attack robots are blown away as you deftly pilot your deadly airbike through fantastic 16-bit 3-D-like graphics of Earth terrain and alien ruins. Next class, you hop in your fighter plane to battle boss enemies and mop up in the bonus rounds. When you've finally mastered armament upgrades and piloting skills, you'll pass level six and graduate, earning the title "Space Fighter."

namco
The Game Creator

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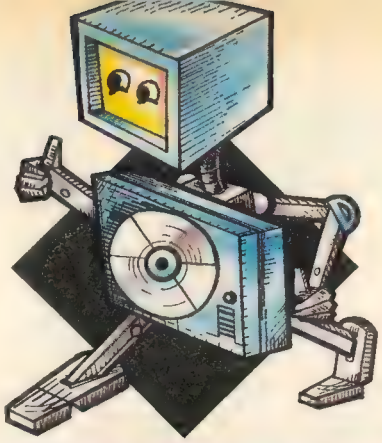


TURBO PLAYERS

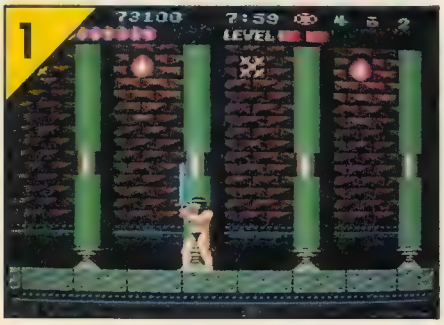
Legendary Axe II

Neil Randall

Legendary Axe II is a lot like *Legendary Axe*. That means if you liked the first game, you'll probably like this one as well — and if you didn't, you won't. Judging from the popularity of the original game, it seems that most people liked *Legendary Axe*.

This time around, you're not Gogan the mighty warrior. Instead, you're Prince Sirius, the youngest son of good King Brace. The king, who took over from the defeated evil king Drodam, recently passed away. Now a dispute has arisen over who should inherit the crown.

Prince Zach is the eldest son, but he's unpopular and evil in his own way. You, instead, are the true choice of the people. But Prince

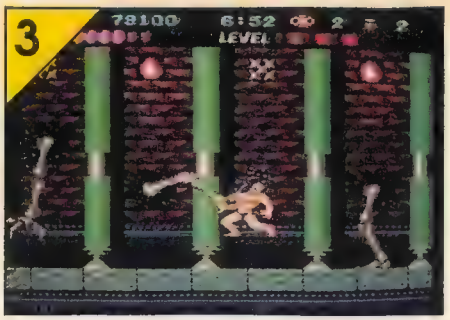


Zach has called upon the power of the exiled Drodam in a bid to deny you the throne. Now you're ready to enter the palace and do battle once more, legendary royal sword in hand, in an attempt to defeat your evil brother.

All this background doesn't really matter much, though. *Legendary Axe II* is an action game, not a role-player. All you really have to do is plug in the game card and start flailing away. Like its predecessor, *Legendary Axe II* is filled with sword-wielding, axe-swinging action from start to finish, and keeping on your toes is the key to winning.

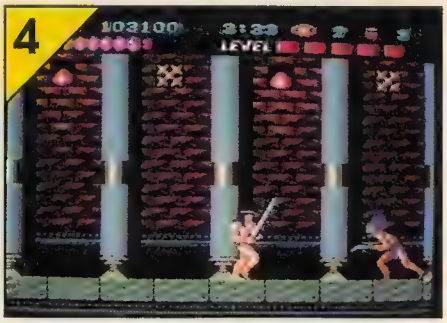
You begin the game with three lives. A life gauge on the screen decreases when you suffer hits, and it increases when you find certain objects. When the gauge reaches zero, you lose a life. When all three lives are lost, you're out of the game.

You can get an extra life each time you score 50,000 points, and you can also expand the life gauge



from the initial five marks to ten. A nice touch is that the maximum number of marks on the gauge decreases with each life lost.

In addition to the pressures of staying alive, you have a limited amount of time in which to complete each stage of your journey. At the end of a stage, you encounter an enemy boss. These bosses grow increasingly dangerous until you finally confront your evil brother. In this sense, *Legendary Axe II* is like a great many other NEC TurboGrafx-16 games (and games for other systems, for that matter).



1 At the start of level 3, Prince Sirius stands with his sword raised high. It's not the only weapon he'll need.

2 Sirius launches a blue star at a somersaulting enemy. Each enemy has his own capabilities, and you'll have to learn them as you go.

3 From out of nowhere, Sirius is attacked by arms and legs coming out of a wall. Watch these things, because they'll quickly use up all of your lives.

4 There's no rest for the weary. After fighting past hordes of monsters below, Sirius faces more somersaulters above.

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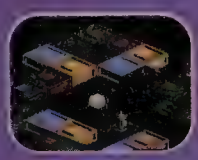
Most videomaniacs will want to hog Pictionary all to themselves for the arcade action. Others might choose to play the electronic version of the legendary board game. Better yet, everyone can join in on the fast-paced, video quick-draw super arcade action together. So, get ready for Pictionary like it's never been played before.



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TURBO PLAYERS

1 Leaping upward, Sirius takes aim at a Oui-Oui, a female bat-monster. Hit these things quickly before they swoop down on you.

2 Stuck in some slime, Sirius finds himself under attack by two deadly skeletons. To get out of the slime, jump three times.

3 This boss appears at the end of level 3. His ball and chain are deadly, and you'll have to get in close to defeat him.

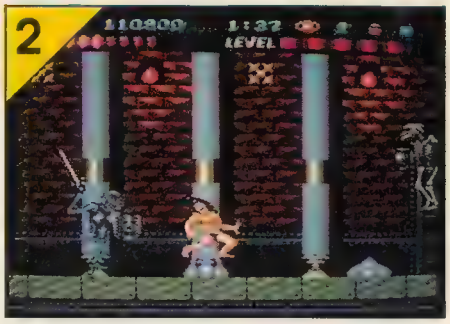
4 Well, you can't win 'em all. When his life gauge runs all the way down, it's curtains for Sirius.

Surely it's time for game designers to become more innovative and find an alternative to the prevailing "boss" model.

Needless to say, *Legendary Axe II* is filled with other enemies: Pump Men (soldiers); Noma-Locks (skeleton soldiers, including one type which is a very capable shield-

carrier); Oui-Oui's (bat-women); and the Tobo, who fires homing missiles. There's even a small dragon that takes you completely by surprise, and a host of zombies with a variety of deadly weapons.

As Prince Sirius, you can run, jump, throw bombs, and attack with whatever weapon you have in hand. Button I controls your jumps, and Button II your attacks. The Run button — be careful not to hit it accidentally! — releases magic bombs, which are wonderful (but rare) little weapons that wipe out several enemies at once. The number of bombs you have is displayed at the top of the screen.



Three other weapons are available. The sword, with which you begin the game, is excellent against some opponents but needs to be strengthened with magic to defeat others. To strengthen it, don't miss the sword power-ups that appear after you destroy certain enemies. When you jump up into one of these power-up circles, the sword's effectiveness increases dramatically.

The other two weapons are an axe (superb for close-range fighting) and a sickle and chain, which lets you quickly turn and defeat enemies sneaking up behind you.

You can gain both of these weapons by finding the power-up circles with the appropriate symbols. It's usually best to grab these weapons when you can, because they'll help against the enemies who are invariably lurking just around the corner.

Other power-up items help you along as well. A star restores half of your life gauge, a half-moon gives you a full life, and a medallion restores all lives (and is predictably rare). All of these items can be found only after defeating enemies.

Legendary Axe II is quick, action-packed, and enjoyable. But unfortunately, it lacks innovation. If you want a game that you'll be able to play the moment you put it into the machine, give it a try. But pass it by if you're looking for a game with a wealth of new ideas.

GP

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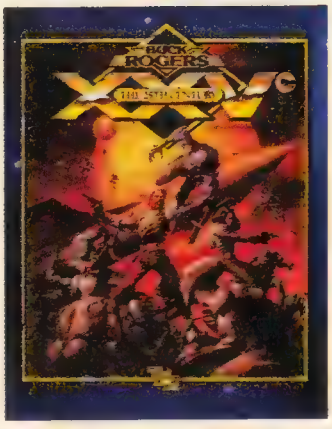

The XXVc role-playing game is packed with adventure, fantastic civilizations, genetically-engineered races, and future-science technology. This game contains action-packed adventures sure to thrill science-fiction fans and game players alike.

The computer game thrusts you into a race to save humanity from the enemies of the inner planets. Players must follow clues across the solar system, through the space ways, and to the surfaces of Mars, Venus and the orbiting satellites of Mercury to discover the awesome DOOMSDAY Device.

Earth's future is in your hands! Look for these games at book, computer, hobby and comic stores everywhere.

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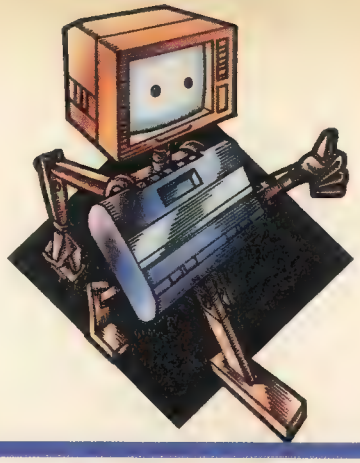


ATARI SAFARI

RoadBlasters and Paperboy

Tom R. Halfhill

So, you thought the 1990s were going to be a "kinder, gentler" decade, eh? Not with games like Atari Corp.'s *RoadBlasters* and *Paperboy*!

Take *RoadBlasters*, for instance. It's a car-racing game in which you go speeding down a busy highway while avoiding such everyday road hazards as merging traffic, oil slicks, explosive mines, curbside cannons, and road-hogging cars and motorcycles that blow up on contact. You can shoot back with such weapons as lasers, rapid-fire cannons, and cruise missiles.

In other words, *RoadBlasters* is a fairly accurate simulation of rush hour on a Los Angeles freeway.

Then there's *Paperboy*. In this game, you're supposedly a bicycling teenager who's delivering the daily newspaper to homes in a typical suburban neighborhood. Hazards include loony lawnmowers, belligerent dogs, inconsiderate kids on skateboards, hostile fire hydrants, and even funeral hearses driven by reckless maniacs.

But that's OK, because you're really a teenage terrorist in disguise. If someone on your paper route won't subscribe, you deliver a newspaper to them anyway — right through their picture window. And while you're at it, you'll knock over their garbage cans and vandalize their lawn ornaments. That'll teach 'em what happens when they flee the city for the suburbs!

Both *RoadBlasters* and *Paperboy*, of course, are based on arcade hits that have been widely translated for other videogame systems and home computers. The Lynx version of *RoadBlasters* is particularly noteworthy for its fast, smooth animation and amazing illusion of speed.

Another outstanding feature is the digitized speech. From time to time, a voice offers helpful hints and advice, such as "Watch for cross traffic" or "Fuel level critical."

Although *RoadBlasters* encourages you to blast away at the opposing traffic, it discourages careless shooting. At the end of each round, your points are multiplied by a factor that's determined by your shooting accuracy. The higher your hit ratio, the greater your score.

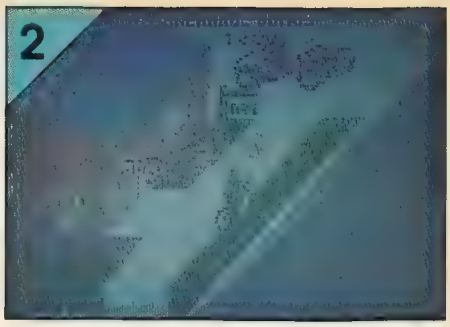
If you'd prefer a somewhat slower-paced game, check out *Paperboy*. It's a close translation of the arcade game, with the same diagonal scrolling, zany hazards, and bonus rounds. Your main goal is to deliver copies of *The Daily Sun* ("The World's Most Throwable Newspaper") to all of your subscribers on the block. Before departing on your route, you can choose from three difficulty levels: Easy Street, Middle Road, or Hard Way.

Subscribers' houses are easy to spot, because they have delivery boxes clearly labeled *Sun*. For each paper you successfully toss into a box, you get 250 points. If a house *doesn't* have a delivery box out front, it's an open target. Flinging your papers like rocks, you can shatter windows, spill garbage cans, and sometimes even flatten the stingy residents themselves. The game continues through each day of the week until you eventually lose all your lives by crashing your bicycle into various obstacles.

GP

1 Fed up with road hogs? In *RoadBlasters*, you can simply blow them to bits. With a rapid-fire cannon and cruise missiles, who needs a horn?

2 In *Paperboy*, you're an avenging angel of the suburbs. Subscribers get their daily paper; non-subscribers get broken windows.



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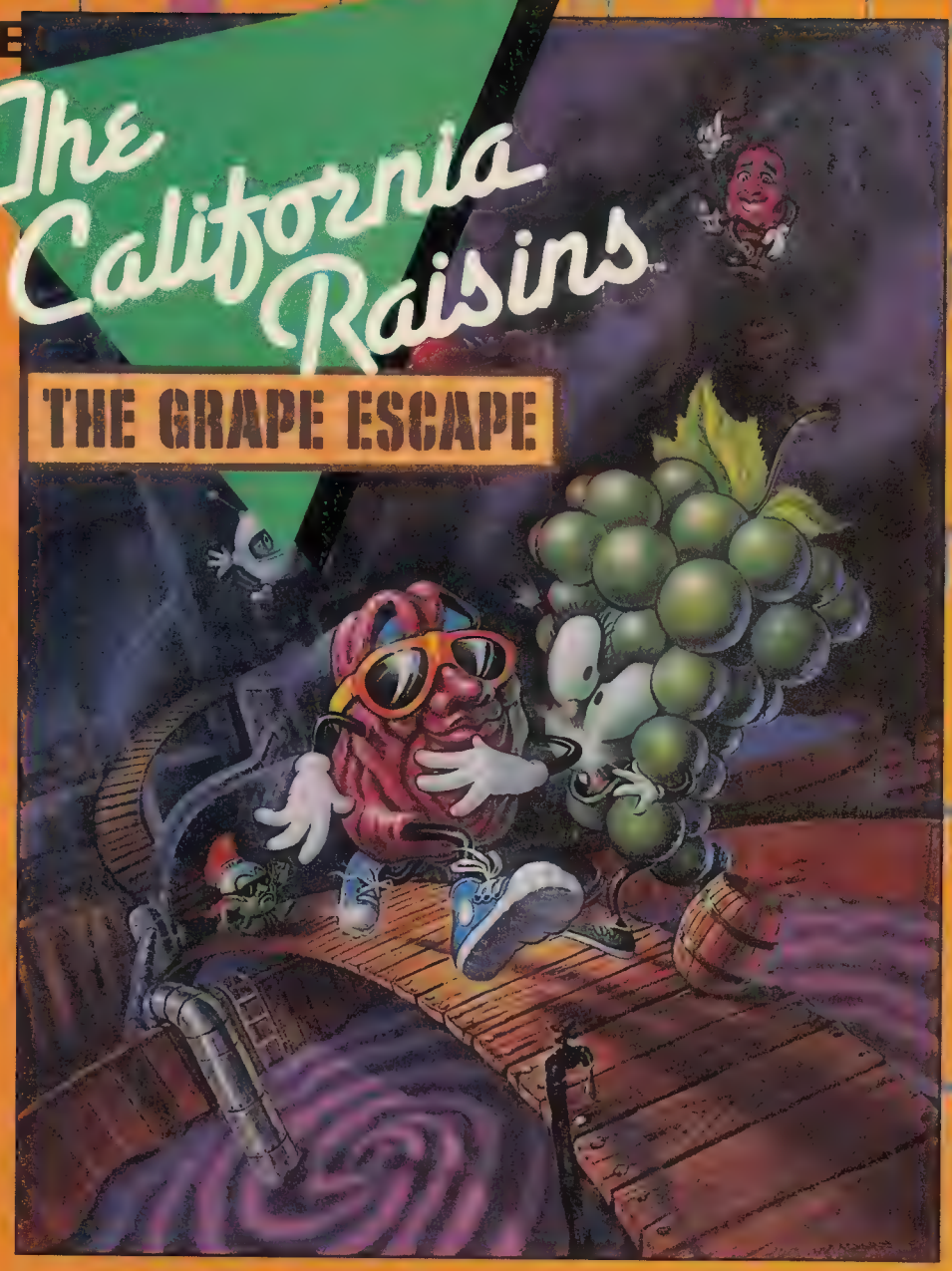
NINTENDO GAME of the MONTH



Jeff Lundrigan

The California Raisins are making their first Nintendo appearance in a new game from Capcom, the same company which brought us *DuckTales* and *Chip 'n Dale Rescue Rangers*. Like those games, *The California Raisins: The Grape Escape* is especially recommended for younger players.

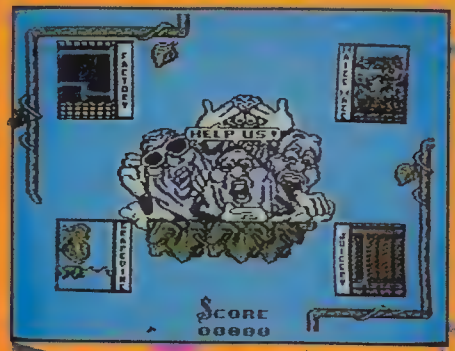
In this adventure, the Raisins are in trouble and it's up to you to save them. The Wild Bunch, a totally tone-deaf music group, has kidnapped the Raisins, stolen all of their music, and is holding them captive on the top floor of Sky High Studios. You may be just a wrinkled little raisin yourself, but *somebody's* got to do *something*.

Your goal is to recover the four Golden Notes that will grant you entry into Sky High Studios, then make your way to the penthouse and set the Raisins free. It won't be easy, because an army of Sour Grapes and Bad Apples will try to stop you, and your only defense is your ability to hurl blobs of grape jelly.

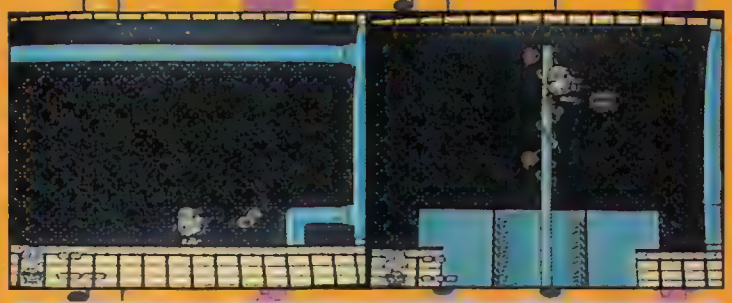
Those rotten fruits deserve every drop of jelly you can throw at them, though, and it'll take every drop you have. If you don't succeed, the California Raisins will never make it to their next concert.

Capcom, 1283-C Mountain View/Alviso Road, Sunnyvale, CA 94089.

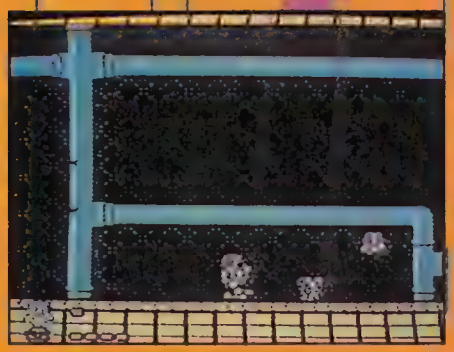
The executives of CALRAB (CALifornia RAisins Board) implore you to rescue their friends, the California Raisins. How can you turn them down?



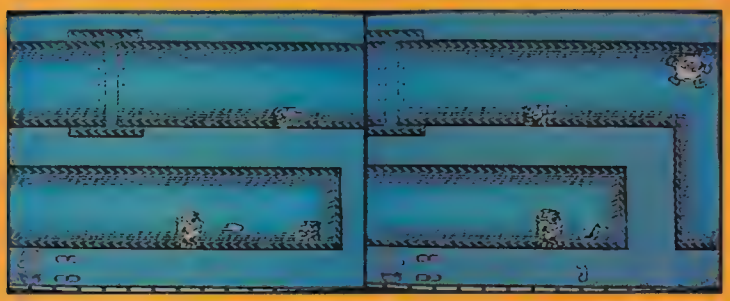
The game is divided into four sections, and you can tackle them in any order you want. It doesn't make much difference where you start, because none of the sections is really any easier than the others.



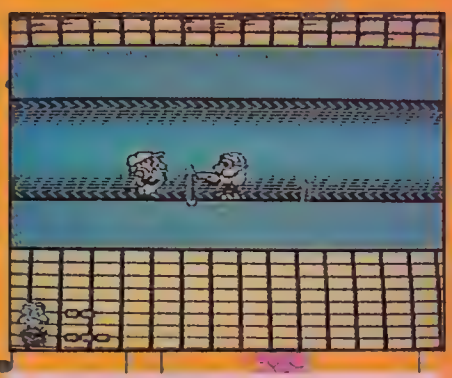
Two items are fairly common throughout the game. The notes to the Raisins' stolen music are scattered everywhere, so grab as many as you can. Sunshine symbols are a little more difficult to find, but they restore all your hit points. (Raisins love sunshine.)



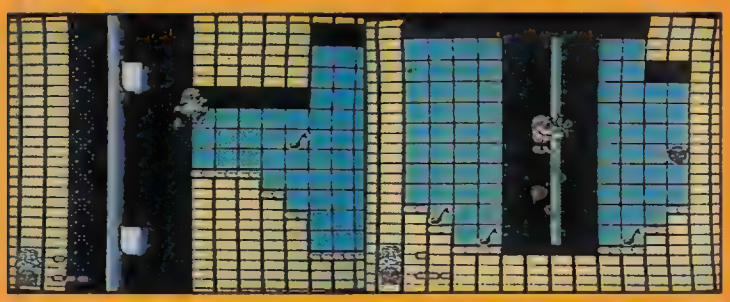
Look for these raisinettes, too. They give you an extra life.



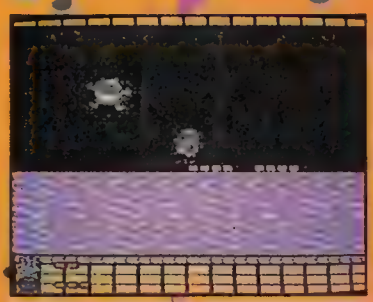
Throw blobs of jelly constantly — musical notes, sunshine, and even extra lives are often hidden inside columns and walls. Only by shooting them will you find out if anything is inside. This column, for example, holds a note.



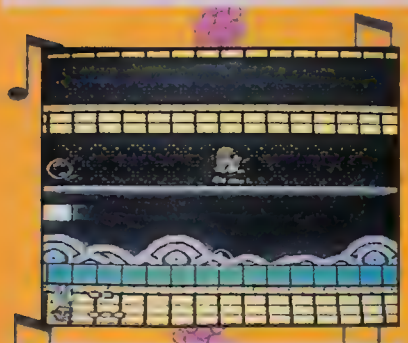
Among the first obstacles in the Jelly Factory are these spikes rising out of the floor. You can't jump over them, and they block your shots. Wait for them to drop, then run past. But first, make sure you shoot any enemies who are in the way.



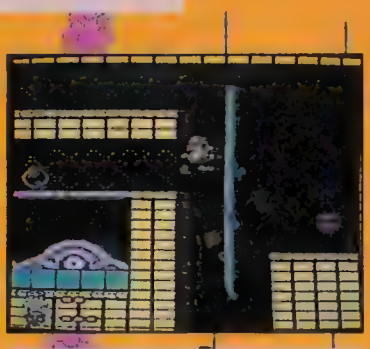
Catch a ride on this jelly conveyor by hopping onto one of the scoops, then jump off at the first level. Run to the right and you'll eventually come to a chamber filled with musical notes.



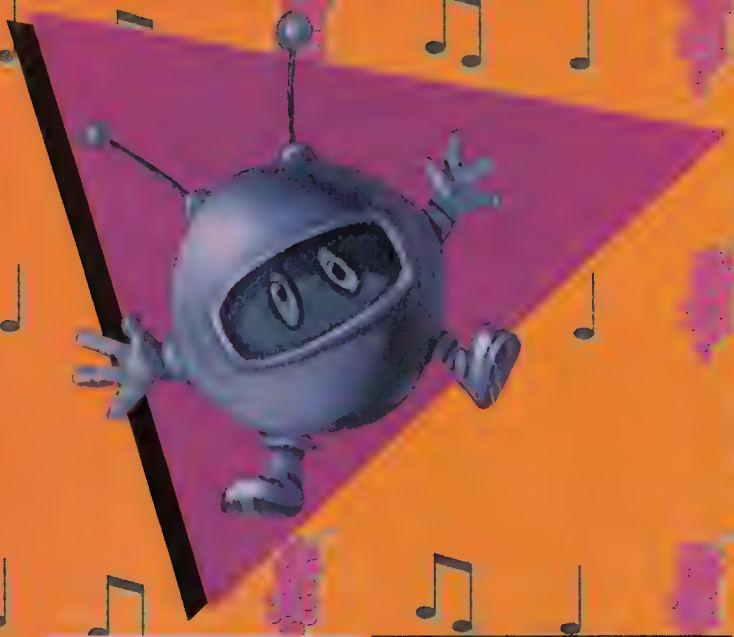
As you cross the jelly vat, this spacey character becomes a real pest. Wait until he's level with you, then shoot him with a blob of jelly. Another character will appear, but you'll have a moment to jump to the next platform.

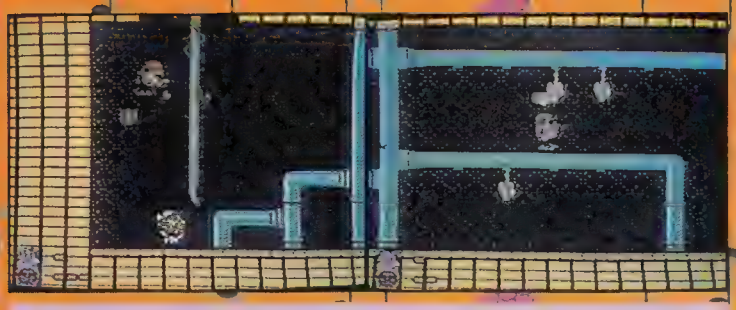


Get back on the conveyor and ride all the way up. You'll find yourself running across the top of the main jelly vat. Watch out — those bubbles are deadly!



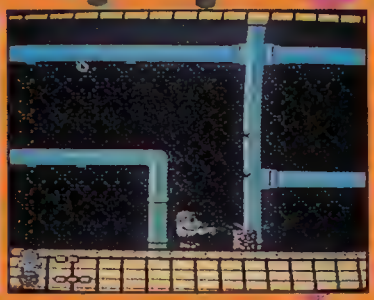
Be careful crossing this gap to get the sunshine. Although you can generally fall a long way without getting hurt, some drop-offs (like this one) are bottomless.





This I-symbol makes you invincible for a short time. You don't come across these symbols very often, and you won't stay invincible for very long, but they'll help you through some tough areas — like these tunnels with leaky steam pipes.

These grape-stones become harmless columns when you shoot them with jelly. If you wait until they're in the right place before you shoot them, you can jump on the columns and get to places you couldn't reach on your own.



At the end of the Jelly Factory is the Banana Boss. He'll try to dodge your blobs of jelly, but just keep firing and jump out of the way when he shoots at you.

When you beat a boss, you'll be rewarded with one of the Golden Notes. After collecting all four, you can unlock the penthouse of Sky High Studios.

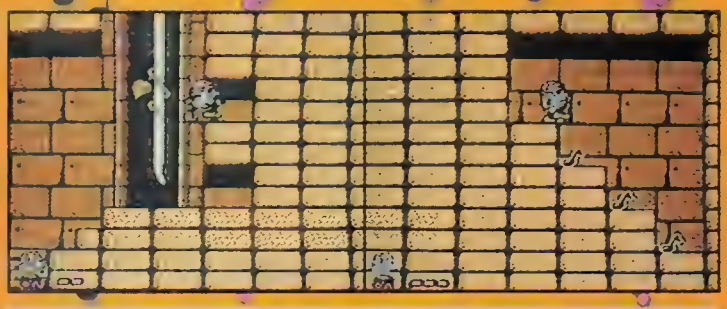
The first obstacle in the Maize Maze is one of the most difficult in the game: You have to cross this river by jumping from vine to vine. It might seem easier to hop across on the rocks below, but the rocks sink under you too fast.

Once you cross the river, things get a little easier, but not much. The native Bad Apples have blowguns, and they're not afraid to use them.

This giant head will blast you if you're standing too far away, so stay close and shoot at its nose. If you score enough hits, the mouth will open to let you underground.

The Maize Maze really *is* a maze — and a dangerous one at that. Make one wrong turn and the consequences are deadly!

Sometimes these boulders come rolling down at you when you're climbing a flight of stairs. If you don't learn how to run backward and leap over them, they'll fall on your head every time.



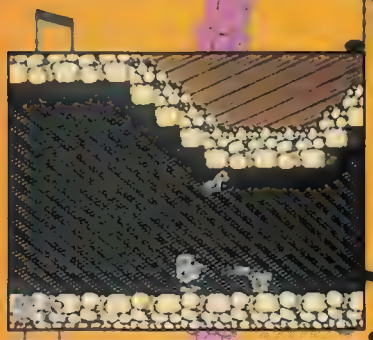
Here and there are secret passages hidden in the walls. If you enter this alcove and keep walking, you'll find a series of chambers with lots of musical notes.

Climb all the way to the top of the vine and go left —you'll find an extra life.

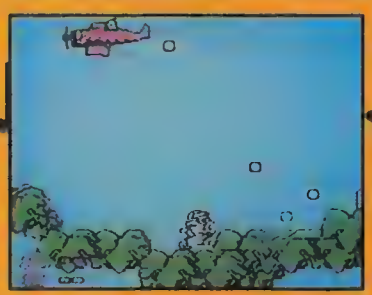
Climb back down the vine about halfway, then go left again. Keep going as far as you can. Behind the snake is another secret room.

Go down and left. A rock will drop from the ceiling, but if you keep moving, it won't hit you. Grab the extra life before going on.

Soon you'll meet the Corn Boss, who bleeds popcorn when he's hit. Watch out for the deadly corn kernels he sprays at you. Wait until he fires, run backward a few steps to dodge the kernels, then run forward so you won't get trapped against the wall.

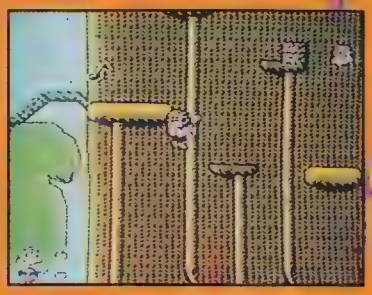


Now you're in the Grapevine stage. It's full of objects you can reach only by shooting grapestones and using them for springboards.

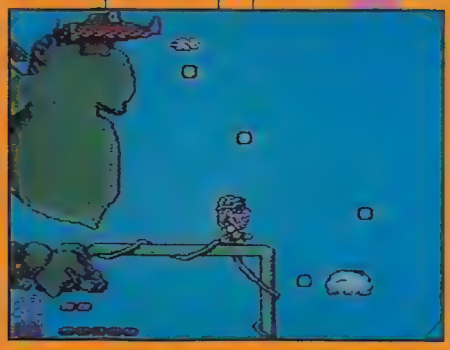


When you climb up onto the Grapevine itself, enemy planes fly overhead and drop bombs on you. Run back the way you came and watch for a break in the rain of bombs.

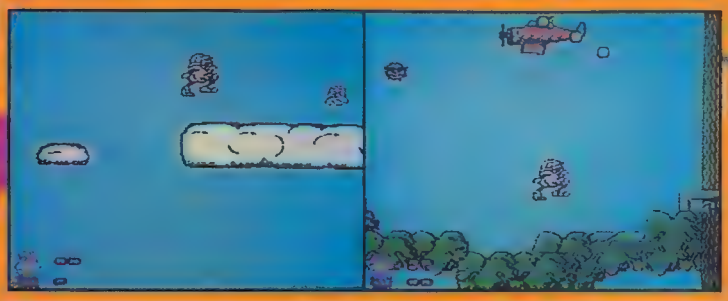
NINTENDO GAME of the MONTH



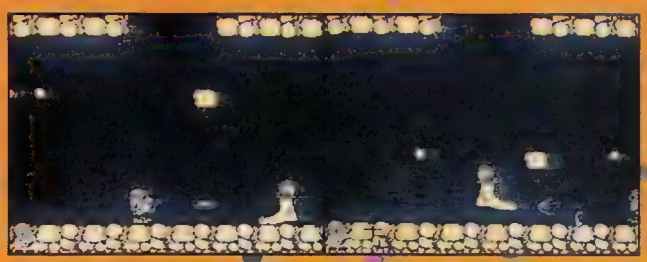
These vines aren't as hard to climb as the ones in the Maize Maze, but they have enemies crawling all over them. If you proceed slowly, you shouldn't have too many problems.



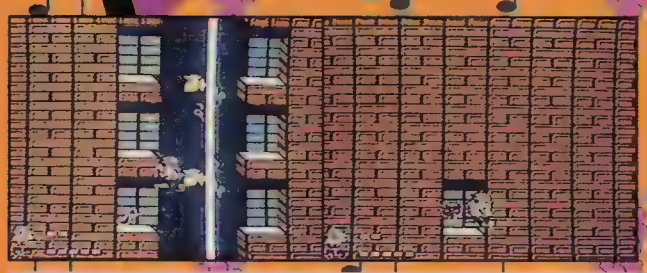
Back outside, the mad bomber is back.



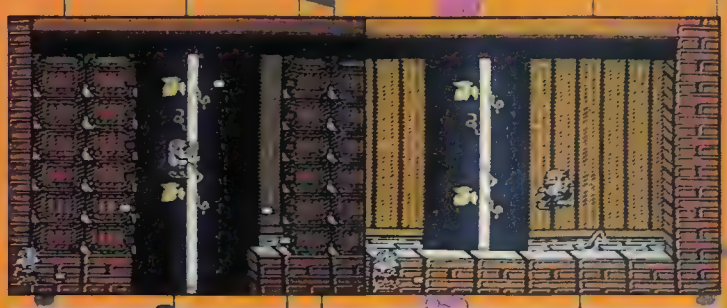
There are two ways you can go from here. Up above, on the clouds, you'll find an extra life, but the going is a little easier if you travel on the vine below. The bomber attacks you either way.



The Foot Boss is one of the most difficult bosses to beat. Not only does he try to stomp you, but rocks constantly fall from the ceiling. If you immediately go to the far right and get behind him, you should be safe. Keep throwing jelly to knock him backward and prevent him from stomping you until he's beaten.

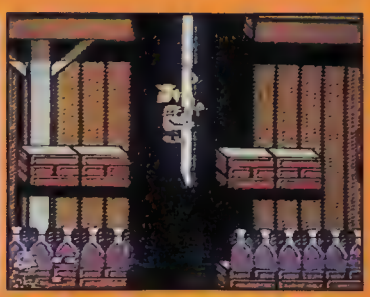


The Juicery is almost as complex as the Maize Maze. Bad Apples are all over the place, and some of the passages lead to danger. But be sure to try all of these alcoves — you'll find another secret room.

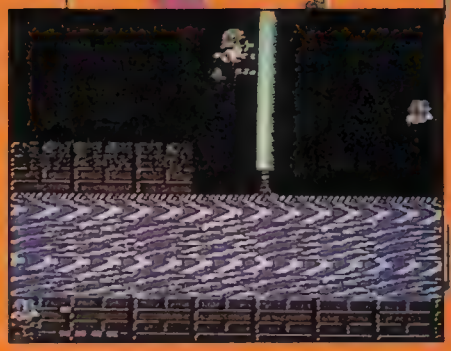


Going all the way up the vine from the juice cellar will eventually bring you to these juice barrels. Above them — if you make it — is a room with a musical note.

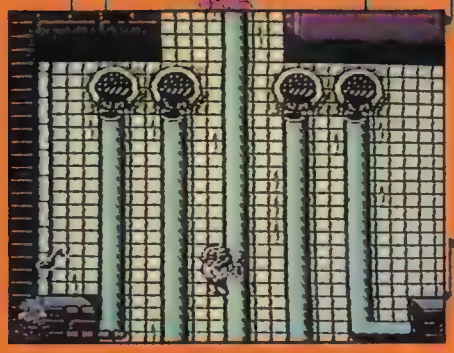
Off to the right of the alcoves and down a vine you'll find the juice cellar. If you want a challenge, there's a musical note to the right and sunshine to the left, but the danger probably isn't worth the reward.



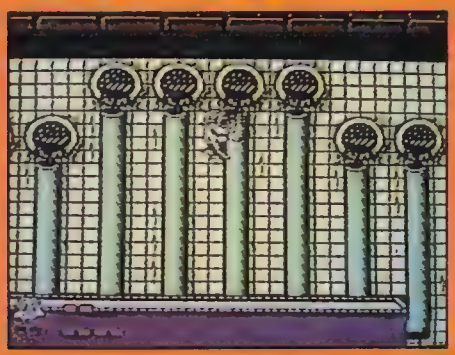
Travel all the way down the first vine (the one that goes past the alcoves). At the bottom of the vine is a very long drop, but the way is clear, as the helpful arrow indicates.



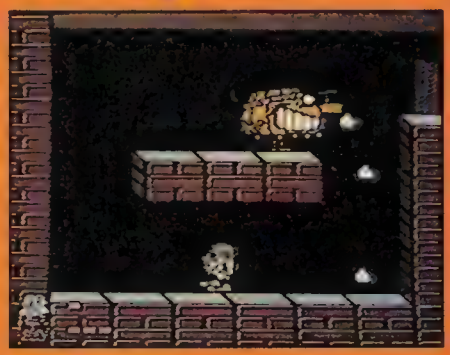
You'll find this pipe after a series of conveyor belts. Pass up the temptation to grab the extra life on the right — you'll probably fall into the juice vat down below.



If you keep going up, you'll find some musical notes and sunshine but not the Juice Boss. To reach the boss from here, go as far right as possible, climb as far up as you can, then go left.



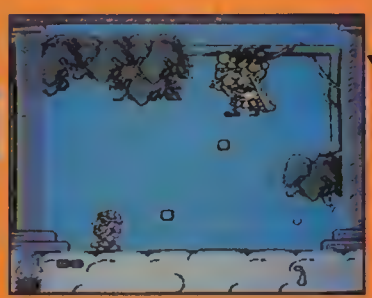
Making your way through these pipes is tough but not impossible. The trick is to stay as near the top of the pipes as you can, while making sure you're below the top of the pipe you're jumping to.



You can't jump high enough to hit the Juice Boss directly, but you can hit something else that'll hurt him — when you hit it, you'll know. Wait in one spot until he stops moving, then dodge the juice he tries to drip on you.

Once you've beaten all four bosses and found the Golden Notes, you'll return to the clouds on your way to Sky High Studios.

This cloud bobs up and down, so wait until it's low enough and then jump on it to reach the vine. The only problem is that while you're waiting, the Centurion Apple will attack. Each time you shoot him, another one appears.



Like the Juice Boss, the Big Boss can't be fired on directly, but he does have a weak spot. Again, you'll know when you hit it. Don't give up — you're almost ready to rescue the Raisins!

SEGA GENESIS GAME OF THE MONTH

Chris Slate
Matthew A. Firme

SWORD OF VERMILION

Sega of America, 573 Forbes Blvd., South San Francisco, CA 94080.

SWORD OF
VERMILION
Long ago, King Tsarkon of Carthahena unleashed his evil hordes upon the peaceful land of Excalabria.
Though the people of Excalabria fought bravely, in the end they were overwhelmed.

Although they fought to drive back Tsarkon's armies, the peace-loving people of Excalabria were soon overwhelmed.

Following in the great tradition of such role-playing games as *Phantasy Star* and *Phantasy Star II*, *Sword of Vermilion* brings to the Genesis the colorful graphics and involved storylines we've come to expect from Sega RPGs.

The story behind *Sword of Vermilion* actually begins 18 years before the game starts. It was then that the evil king Tsarkon sent his legions into the peaceful kingdom of Excalabria. When Excalabria crumbled, its king, Erik V, entrusted his infant son to a servant and told him to flee the land to protect the young prince.

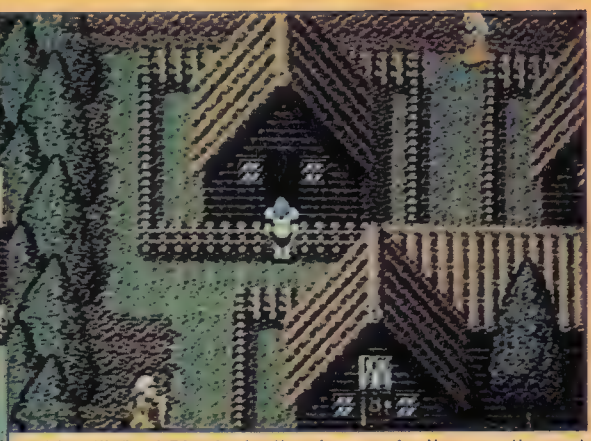
The servant, Blade, sought refuge in a distant village. There, Blade raised the prince as his own son.

But Tsarkon learned that the prince had escaped. Fearing that the boy might someday return to challenge him, Tsarkon sent his armies into the countryside to find Blade and the prince.

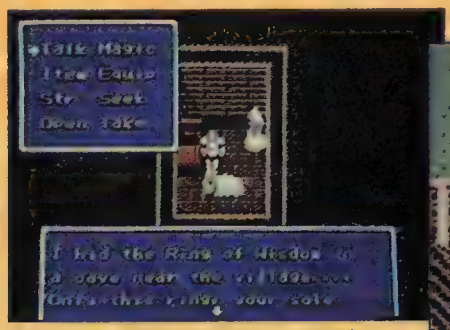
As the game begins, you are the prince, now a young man. You have no idea of your true identity — but before the day is through, your life will change dramatically.

Eighteen years have passed since the terrible day when Excalabria fell. As you begin the game, get used to the options and commands.

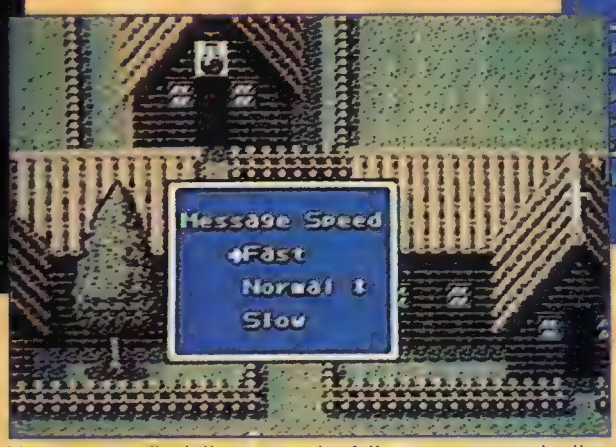
As you talk with the villagers, you learn that your father, Blade, is dying. You must go to him as soon as possible.



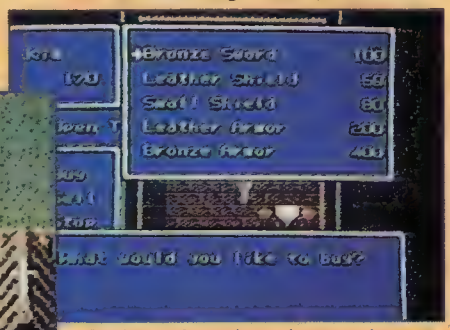
You'll find Blade in the house in the northwest corner of the village. With his last breath, he tells you the truth of your identity, and of the horrors Tsarkon's men are unleashing as they search for you.



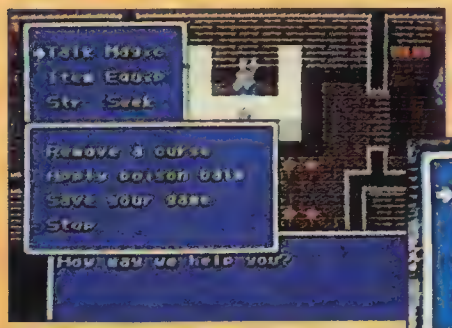
Blade says that only *you* can stop Tsarkon by finding the Rings of Good. The first ring, given to you by your real father, is hidden in a dark cave outside of town. You'll need candles to find it.



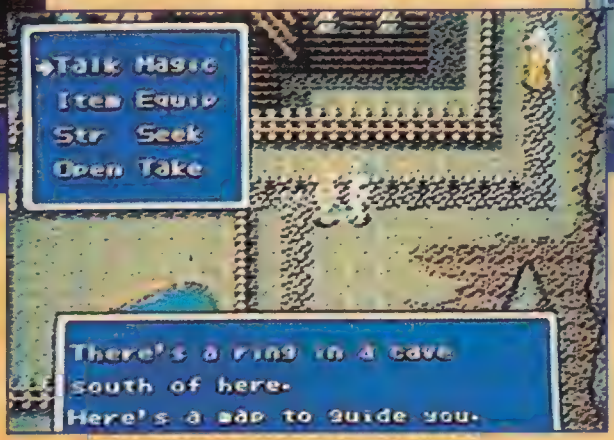
You can adjust the speed of the messages in the game by pressing the Start button.



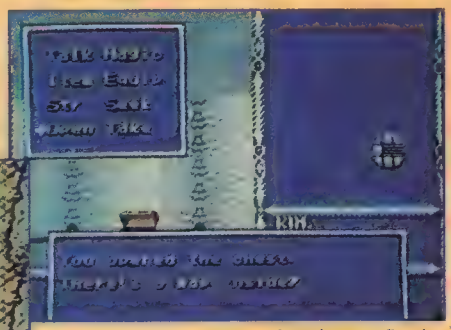
Before leaving town, buy a weapon from the armorer. At first, the only weapon you can buy is the bronze sword. You have to "equip" the sword before you can use it in battle.



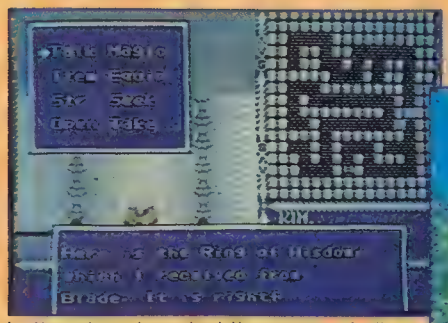
In the village church, you can save your game, seek a cure for poisoned wounds, or have a curse removed.



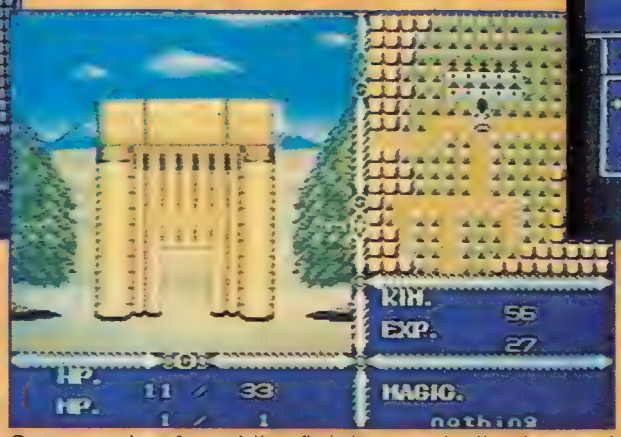
As you talk with villagers, you'll get vital clues to help you on your quest for the rings. Sometimes the villagers will give you maps of the surrounding countryside.



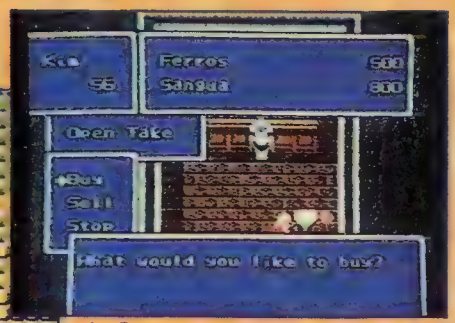
Inside a treasure chest, you find a map to the first cave. Without such help, it's nearly impossible to find your way — especially in some of the complex caves and dungeons found later in the game.



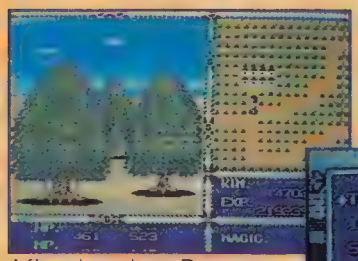
In the dead end at the upper-left corner of the cave, you find the first ring — the Ring of Wisdom.



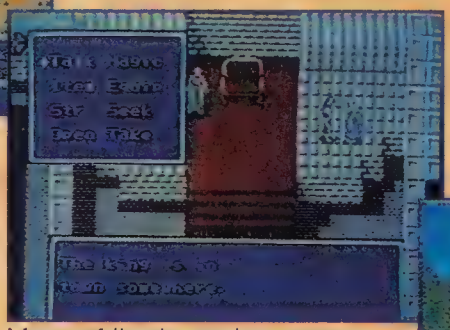
Once you've found the first ring, go to the town of Parma. It's north of Wycliff. On the way, stop in Wycliff and get a new map.



In Parma, you'll have your first opportunity to purchase some magic, in a shop marked with a cane symbol. Ferros is an attack spell, and Sangua will restore hit points lost in battle.

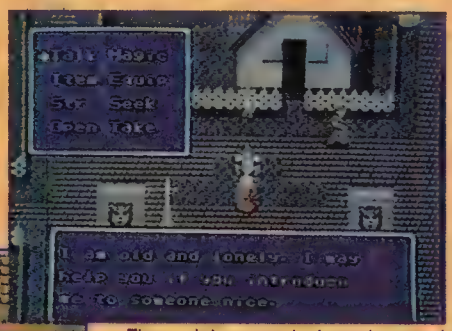


After leaving Parma, travel to the nearby village of Watling. Don't forget to talk to the villagers and pay careful attention to the clues they provide.

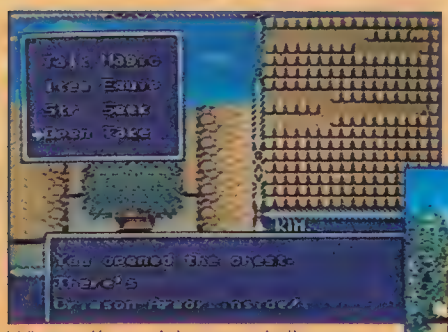


Many of the towns have mysteries just waiting to be solved. In Deepdale, the king is in hiding. You'll have to lure him out with truffles, his favorite snack.

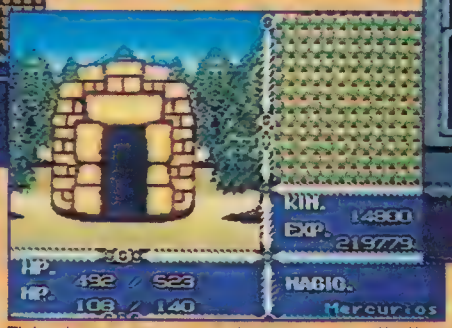
In the town of Keltwick, look for a little old man.



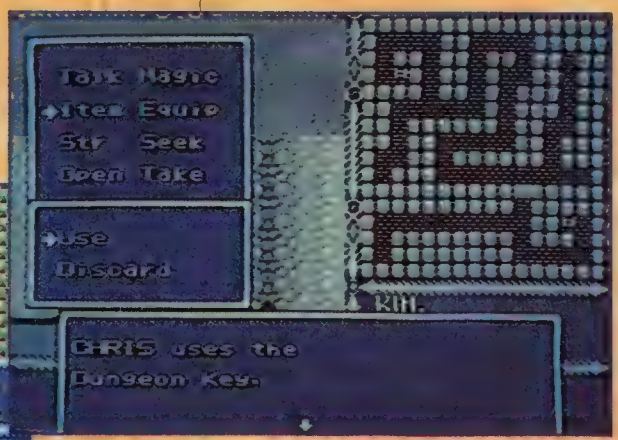
The old man is lonely and asks you to play matchmaker. If you can find him a girlfriend, you'll get a reward.



When the old man tells you where to find the Crimson Armor, look there — even if you looked before.

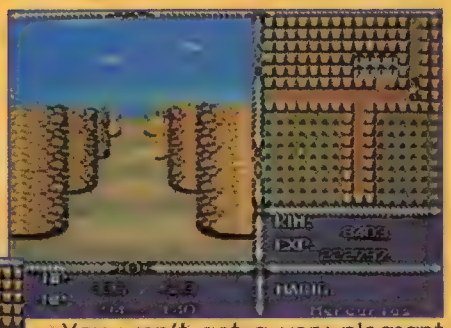


This dungeon runs deep beneath the thick forest and is the only way to get from one side of the forest to the other. Bring plenty of candles.

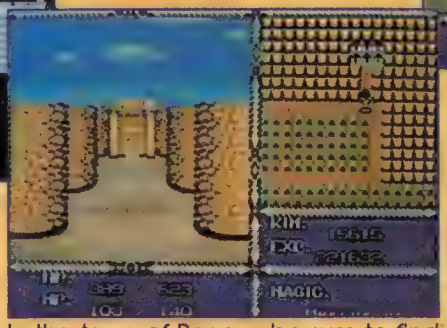


As you advance in the game, you'll have to use special keys to pass through dungeons. Until you find the key, you're stuck.

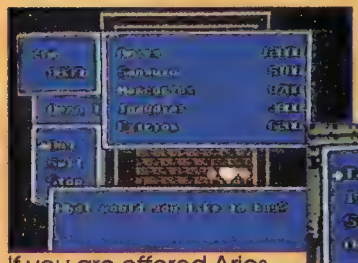
This restaurant in Malaga is the busiest in the realm, and a good place to talk to people and find new clues.



You won't get a very pleasant welcome in Tadcaster. Some thug has been impersonating you and beating up the villagers.



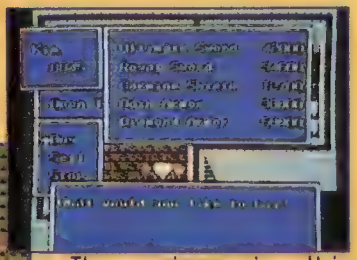
In the town of Barrow, be sure to find the old man who sells passes. Without one, you won't be able to enter the city of Cartahena.



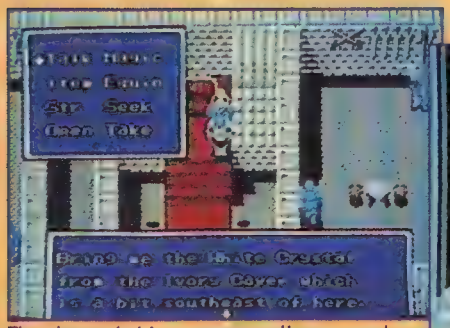
If you are offered Aries magic, buy it! You'll find it invaluable later in the game.

In Helwig, you finally find a date for the lonely man back in Keltwick. As a reward, the old man gives you the coveted Dragon Shield.

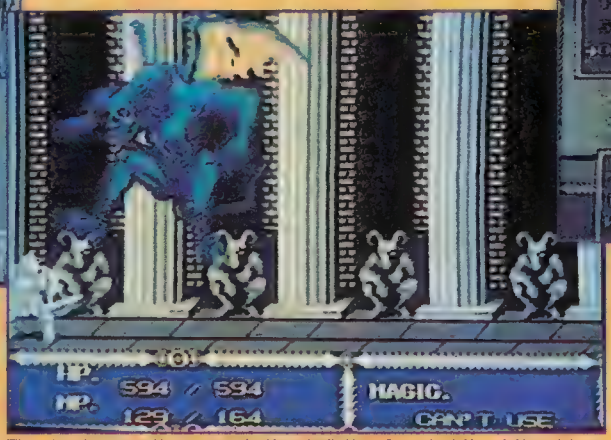
After a long, dangerous journey, you reach the town of Swaffham. This town has many items to offer.



The prices in this Swaffham shop are outrageous! Maybe you should save your money — you'll find more powerful items in the caves outside of town.

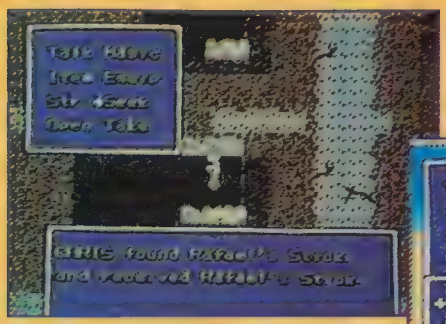


The town's king seems stingy and asks you to do him a favor. But can he be trusted?

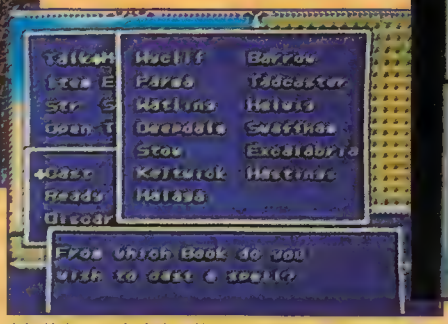


This behemoth guards the White Crystal that the king asked for. Stay on the left side of the screen and strike as he lands. Patience is your best weapon.

Once you've secured the crystal, hurry back to the king.

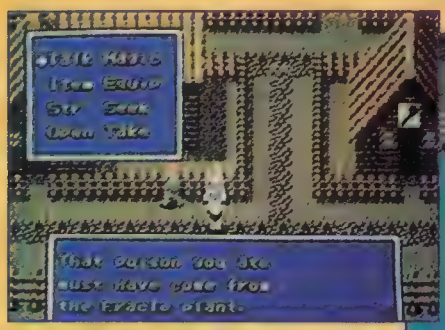


In the silent, abandoned city of Excalabria, you'll discover Rafael's Stick. Look in the shop near the town's entrance.

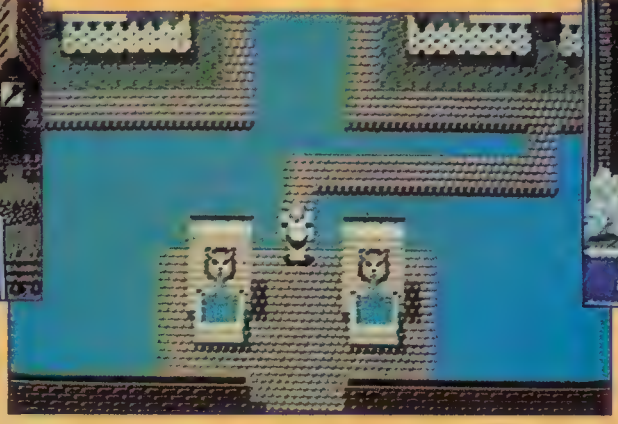


At this point in the game, you must travel back to all the towns you've been to already. The Aries magic proves well worth its price.

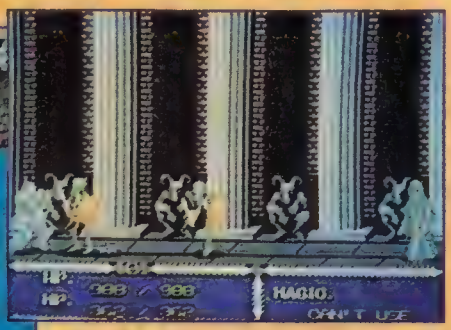
Remember that shopkeeper who stole all your possessions? He was really trying to help. He surprises you by giving you the most powerful weapon of all — the Sword of Vermilion.



In Hastings, beware of the friendly folk offering you food. There's a cook in town with a real grudge against you!

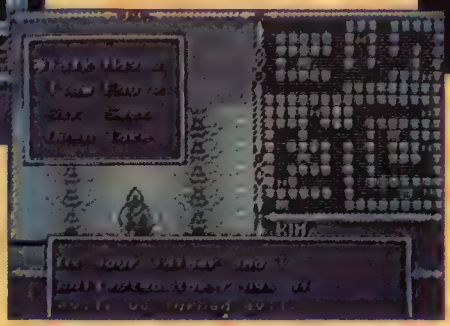


The final destination — Cartahena. Just to the right of the gate is a cave, and the final showdown.

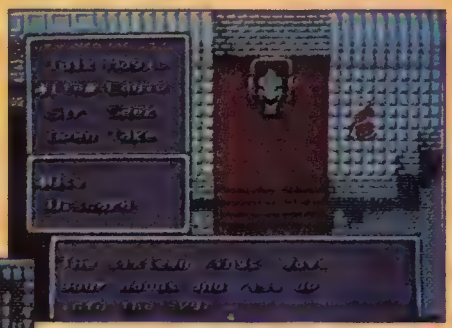


As you close in on Tsarkon, you'll first have to deal with his zombie henchmen.

Now you've really angered Tsarkon. He turns into a horrible monster with two long, deadly tentacles. Jump between the tentacles, hit him a few times, then leap back.



A shocking revelation after the battle will shake your faith. Whose example will you follow?



You have one final task to perform — and the fate of the entire land depends on your success.

GP

WING COMMANDER

COMPUTER GAME of the MONTH

System requirements: IBM, Tandy, or compatible computer running at a speed of 12 megahertz or faster; hard disk recommended; EGA, MCGA, VGA, or Tandy 16-color graphics; mouse or joystick optional; supports Ad Lib, Sound Blaster, and Roland sound boards.

William R. Trotter

Origin's *Wing Commander* is simply the best space-combat simulation ever made for PCs. It combines the tense excitement of a great arcade shooter with a role-playing story of surprising depth and swashbuckling melodrama.

Designed from the ground up (primarily by Chris Roberts) to take maximum advantage of the power, speed, and memory of high-end PCs, *Wing Commander* offers graphics and animation that will make your jaw drop in astonishment.

Missions take place against a deep, velvety void sprinkled with ice-blue nebulas, pitted asteroids, and flaming suns. Enemy warships—from sleek, light fighters to huge, wallowing transports — are modeled, scaled, and animated with uncanny realism and detail. The space battles are fast, furious, deadly melees. The illusion of battling against an intelligent, aggressive foe is at times quite unnerving.

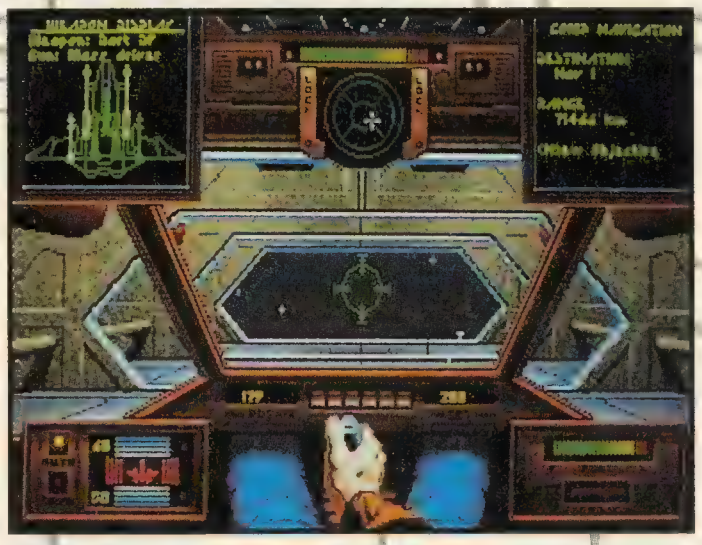
In contrast to the usual simple-minded arcade shooter, in which victory usually goes to the strong of thumb, victory in *Wing Commander* goes to pilots who learn how to evade, how to maneuver at high speeds without ramming other vessels, and how to think two steps ahead of the enemy. When all the jinking and turning is done, you'd better end up with your foe's exhaust pipes in your missile-lock instead of the other way around.

Strategic thinking, improvisation, and initiative are important, too. As in real combat, the unexpected often happens and a judgment call must be made. Do you ignore those apparently easy kills lurking behind that asteroid belt and get on with the mission, or do you try to score a couple of quick victories?

Or suppose you're attacking a big Dorkir transport that's loaded with reinforcements for a besieged enemy base. Your wingman—a reckless kid who's more concerned with racking up kills than following orders—gets into trouble and cries for help. Do you ignore his pleas and dive on the transport, hoping you can dodge its flak and put your missiles into its belly before the kid gets shot to pieces? Or do you break off your attack and come to his rescue?

In *Wing Commander*, these are not trivial decisions. If your wingman dies, you have to watch his funeral on the screen. On the other hand, if the enemy transport gets through, an important battle could be lost.

Wing Commander is an elaborately branched program. The outcome of your seventh mission determines not only what your eighth mission will be, but also has an impact on the entire cam-

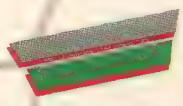


The launching sequence is impressive, but you can skip any or all of the animated scenes once you've seen them a few times. This speeds up the game considerably.

paign. If you fail too many missions, the tide will turn in favor of the enemy. Once that happens, you'll have to fly and shoot like a winged demon to wrest the initiative back again.

Your enemies are the Kilrathi, a ruthless, fanatically brave race of aliens who resemble a cross between lions and tabby cats. Their goal is the enslavement or extermination of the human race. As the game begins, the Terran Confederacy is stretched thin and both sides have thrown everything they've got into the strategic Vega Sector.

To the Kilrathi, humans are nothing more than "monkeys." Humans, in turn, disdainfully refer to the Kilrathi (with a touch of grudging respect) as "hairballs" or "fleabags."



The Kilrathi are a notch above the usual computerized opponents. Origin has created a number of deadly Kilrathi aces, each with his own style of flying. You'll meet them during the course of ferocious one-to-one dogfights in deep space. Some of these encounters take place inside asteroid fields, where you have to keep one eye on the enemy and one eye on the great pockmarked boulders tumbling through space all around you. During combat, your Kilrathi opponents will sometimes direct personal taunts and insults at you. If your computer has extended memory, you'll even be able to see their faces as they jeer.

This attention to detail, fitted seamlessly into the context of an ongoing campaign, gives startling depth to the role-playing aspect of *Wing Commander*. Make no mistake: This game draws you in and doesn't let go until the Terrans either defeat the Kilrathi or go down in balls of flaming plasma after an epic last-ditch stand.

By using the save-game feature to mark your place, it's possible to play straight through to victory — if you don't mind refighting the same missions over and over again until you win. But a more entertaining method is to play several careers at once, letting the victories and defeats dictate the

Your first assignment is to fly a Hornet fighter — fast and maneuverable, but lightly armed and shielded.

Learn new tactics on the training simulator, located on the left side of the pilots' bar.

Dramatic narrative sequences — such as this "scramble" scene — do a lot to enhance the role-playing depth of Wing Commander.

Some of the most reliable pilots you'll fly with are female. In fact, Wing Commander *is refreshingly non-sexist, especially for such a swashbuckling kind of game.*

Wing Commander *unashamedly borrows much of its imagery from the* Star Wars *saga (although by now those images have nearly become cultural archetypes).*

story's progress.

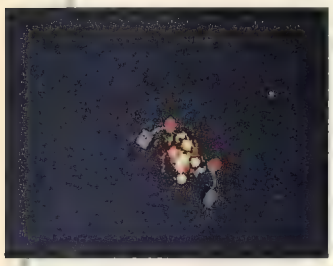
Those who have an aversion to complicated flight simulators need not be shy about taking control of a Terran fighter in *Wing Commander*. Origin has made this aspect of the game as simple as possible, consistent with realism. You will spend most of your time and concentration on flying and fighting, not punching keys and watching lots of gauges and screens.

Origin says that one of its goals in *Wing Commander* was to "advance the state of the art in computer games." As a result, the breathtaking experience of the game is best savored on a fast 16-megahertz computer with 256-color VGA graphics and a good sound board. If you have such a system, your reward will be the smoothest animation, the lushest graphics, and a thunderously effective soundtrack.

Wing Commander also runs well on 12-megahertz computers, although some of the more complex scenes may be a bit jerky. The VGA graphics are so terrific, however, that playing the game with EGA graphics is recommended only as a stopgap measure.

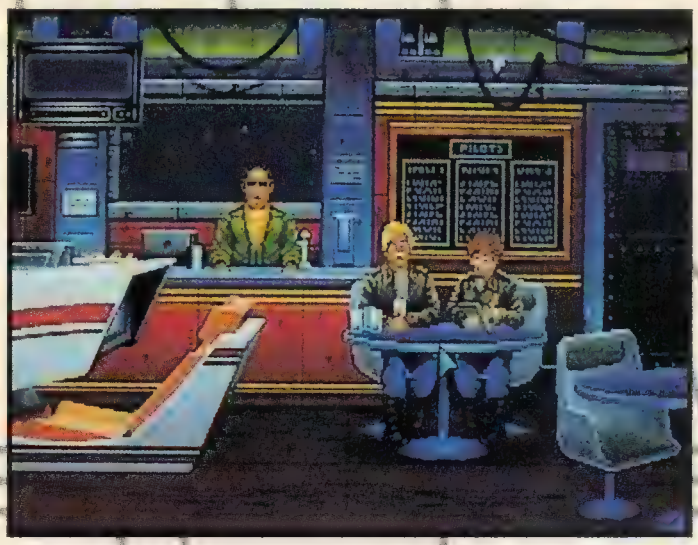
It's only when you see a game this good, this compelling, and this virtuosic that you realize how thin is the line which separates computer entertainment from a genuine interactive movie.

In *Wing Commander*, the art of computer gaming has been not merely advanced — it has taken a quantum leap.



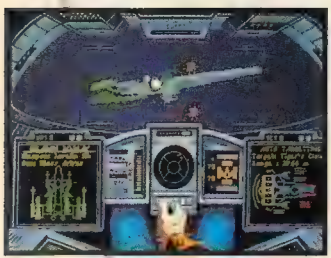
Large Kilrathi targets may take many hits to bring down, but when they do start to explode, the screen fills with fireworks.

Back inside the pilots' bar, you can pick up some pointers, practice maneuvers on the training simulator, or banter with Shotglass, the friendly barkeep.



If the Vega campaign starts to go badly, you'll see dramatic news flashes from other locations, inspiring you to redouble your efforts.

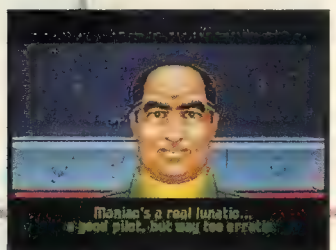
Whenever you or one of your comrades is killed, you have the option of viewing a poignant burial-at-space ceremony.



Here's a frightening sight: The Terran mothership Tiger's Claw *is under heavy attack. If you don't save her, the game ends with you drifting helplessly in space.*

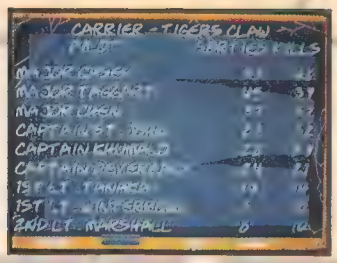
Escort missions are tricky. The enemy tries to lure you away from the ship you're protecting, and the temptation may be overwhelming.

Whenever you need an ego-boost, you can always call up a view of your medals and decorations. Go ahead — nobody's looking!



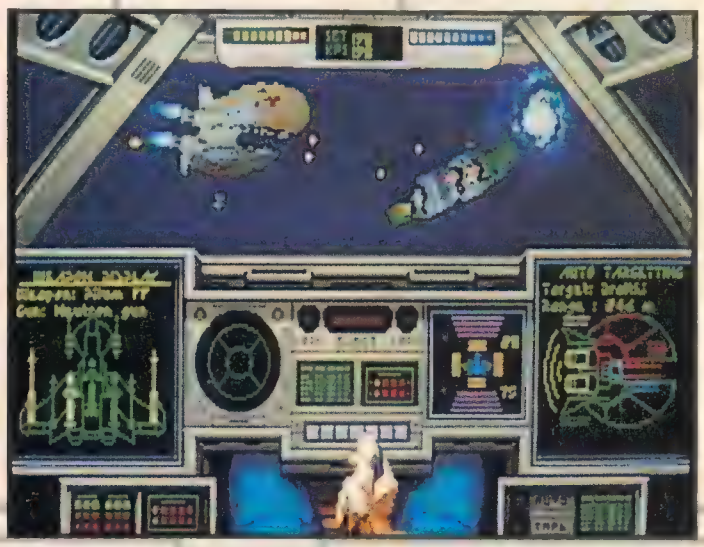
Between missions, be sure to talk to your colleagues in the bar. You can pick up some good tactical tips as well as advice on other pilots' personalities and styles.

If you're hemmed in by asteroids, you may be able to gain some maneuvering room by pulverizing the bigger ones with your cannon.

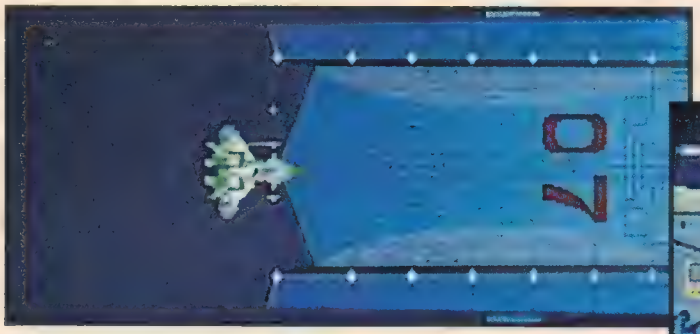


Keep up with your ranking on the barroom scoreboard. If you perform even moderately well, you should advance rapidly.

This is Maniac, a fearless pilot but a glory-hound. He can get you into serious trouble if you don't watch out for his tendency to go wild in combat.



The wilder the melees, the more careful you must be. It's quite possible to shoot down (or be shot down by) a friendly pilot.

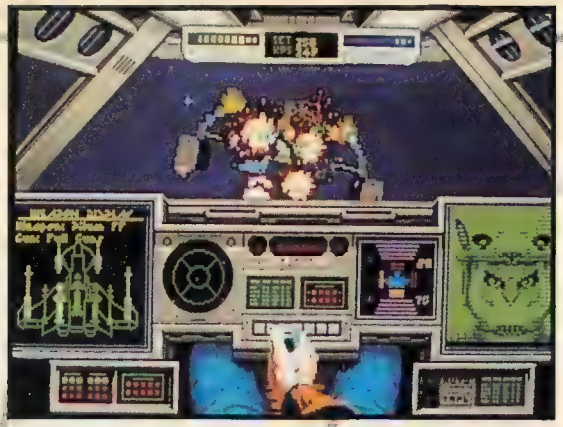


The computer handles the landing sequences. All you have to do is get your spacecraft back to the Tiger's Claw *and request clearance.*

Once you've landed, check the amount of damage your ship has sustained. Sometimes it'll look even worse than this!

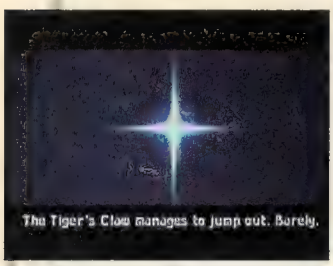
Put the controls on autopilot to save time on longer missions. If you encounter the enemy or a navigational hazard, the controls automatically revert to real-time cockpit mode.

The Skipper praises you when you perform well, and gives you a tongue-lashing when you foul up. He'll debrief you after every mission.



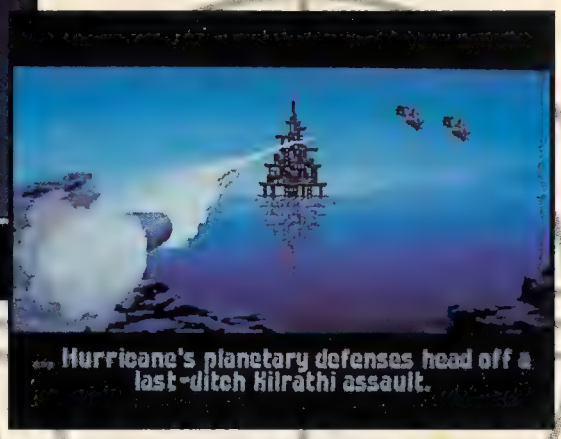
Always try to get behind your target — that's where his shields are weakest and where a shot up his exhaust vents can do critical damage.

An enemy Dralthi-class fighter. You'll engage a lot of these, and you'll find that their Frisbee-like design renders them extremely vulnerable.



When a spaceship makes the jump into hyperspace, the graphics — in the best tradition of Star Wars *— are dazzling.*

One of the last and most crucial missions involves an attack on an almost-impregnable Kilrathi star base. Save all *your missiles for this target.*



In the final stages of a victorious campaign, Kilrathi attacks become more desperate and less successful. If you're losing *at this stage, however, this picture will have a different caption.*

In the grand finale, the Tiger's Claw *herself sails magnificently into battle, all guns blazing.*

Victory! This familiar scene is one of the rewards for success in the Vega campaign.

Medals are given to the bravest and most resourceful fighters at an impressive awards ceremony.

GP

NINTENDO REVIEWS

TOMBS AND TREASURE

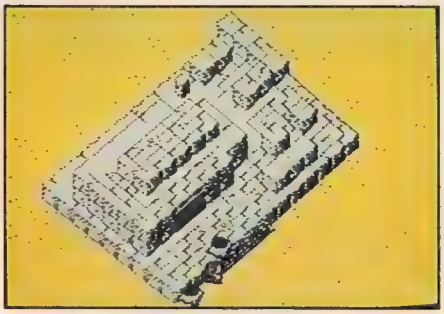
Gary Meredith

Version reviewed: Nintendo. Infocom, P.O. Box 3048, Menlo Park, CA 94025.

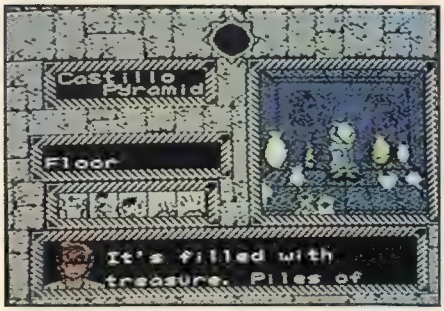
Vacations are supposed to be relaxing, aren't they? At the very least, you shouldn't be attacked by demons and monsters bent on your destruction.

But that's what happened when you decided to spend the summer at the ancient Mayan ruins of Chichen Itza in Mexico. Maybe you should have looked the other way when Professor Imes's tattered archaeological notebook fell into your lap.

Tombs and Treasure puts you on a frantic hunt for riches in the jungles of Yucatan. You are accompanied by your girlfriend and the professor's former native guide. Each of you has particular strengths and abilities, and part of your challenge is to use each character to the best advantage.



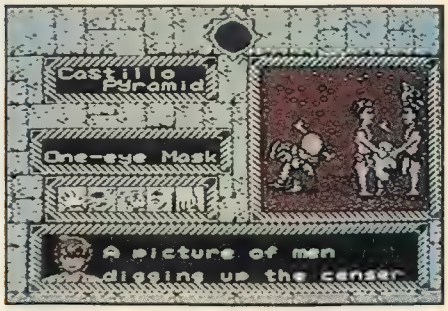
There are numerous ruins at Chichen Itza, center of the fabled Mayan empire.



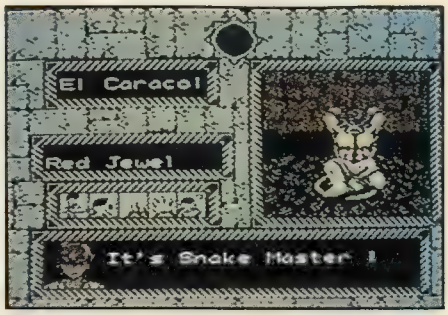
The Castillo Pyramid is filled with treasure, but you're looking for a few special items.

With a few scraps of information from the professor's notebook — and the strange sword the archaeologist left behind before mysteriously disappearing — you must venture into the ruins to uncover the fabled Sun Key and put an end to the terror of the demonic Tentacula. As you get nearer to your confrontation with Tentacula, his monsters become stronger. They even kidnap your girlfriend, adding to the stakes.

The sword is a fairly useless weapon until you find various jewels that fit into its hilt. Each stone makes the sword effective against different monsters, so you'll have to experiment.



Make a note of anything you discover in the ruins.



The sword left by Professor Imes is a useful weapon only if used with the correct jewel.

Because the tombs and temples of Chichen Itza don't give up their secrets easily, you'll have to try even more experiments to solve their many puzzles. Certain items you find provide clues, but only if used with other items. And the relationship between items is not always obvious.

While not a true arcade-type game, *Tombs and Treasure* still has plenty of action. The feeling of excitement is heightened by excellent graphics, including some nice animated sequences. The story, puzzles, and fantastic creatures make *Tombs and Treasure* a fascinating and deeply layered game that should keep you engrossed into the late hours.

GP

SEGA REVIEWS

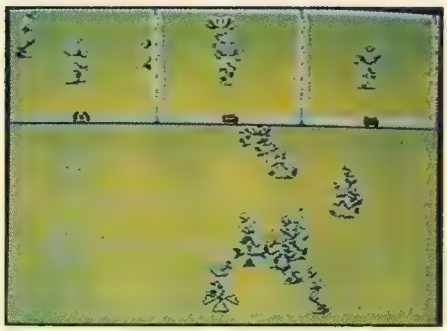
JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL

Brian Carroll

Version reviewed: Sega Genesis. Electronic Arts, 1820 Gateway Drive, San Mateo, CA 94404. Also available for IBM, Tandy, and compatible computers.

John Madden Football is a triumph, striking the perfect balance between strategy and action. Few simulations of any sport are practically as much fun to watch as they are to play, but *John Madden Football* is just that — and a great deal more.

In fact, *John Madden Football* is one of those rare games that might tempt someone into buying a Sega Genesis just to be able to play the game.



Passing is the game's toughest skill to master. You might want to let the computer throw for you at first.

You can choose from 17 pro teams: 16 from National Football League cities plus the All-Madden All-Stars. This diversity allows for different skill levels. For instance, if you're just starting out, try coaching the All-Madden squad or San Francisco to what should be an easy win. Once you get a feel for the game, you can begin directing lesser teams in the bid for an upset.

Because the 16 pro teams mirror their real-world counterparts (based on 1989 statistics), some familiarity with how those teams performed is helpful. For example, if you take control of the Chicago team, you should establish a strong running game and stick to a short-yardage passing attack. If you're coaching Miami, use your quarterback's strong arm and quick release on deep pass routes.

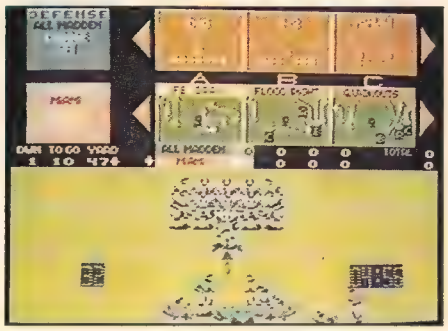
Beginners might want to use the computer override function, which lets the computer execute the plays you call. Passing, for example, is easily the game's most difficult skill. Just let the computer do the work, sit back, and observe how the play develops.

Graphically, *John Madden Football* has no equal. The game's palette of rich colors gives you turf you can almost smell and stadium crowds you'll wind up cheering with. Even snow, mud, and rain are possible.

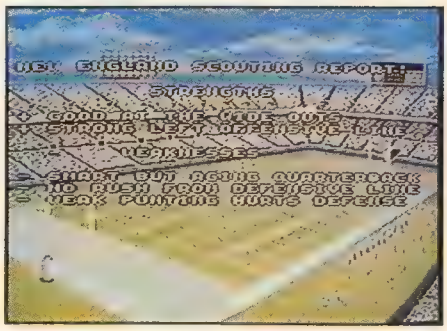
The animation is impressive, too. In some football simulations, watching the action is like bumping down a back road in a truck, but in *John Madden Football* it's like gliding along a freeway in a Rolls Royce. All 22 players are on the field, and they all move simultaneously without flickering.

One warning, however: This videogame is as addictive as the real football games on TV that turn wives into widows each fall. Thanks to *John Madden Football*, additional members of the family are going to be lost.

GP



There are several formations and plays to choose from, so keep the defense guessing by mixing it up.



Before a game, check out the scouting reports for each team.

NINTENDO REVIEWS

SOLAR JETMAN

Lisa M. Bouchey

Version reviewed: Nintendo. Tradewest, 2400 South Highway 75, Corsicana, TX 75110.

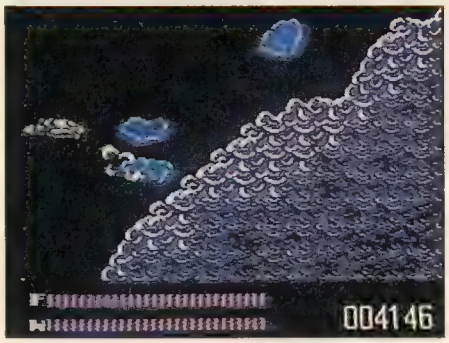
The magnificent Golden Warpship was once the most powerful vessel in Solar Jetman's galactic fleet. But then the ship was stolen by space pirates, taken apart, and hidden in distant areas of the galaxy. Solar Jetman is the only hope for its recovery.

In *Solar Jetman: The Hunt for the Golden Warpship*, you play an interplanetary hero on a quest to rebuild the missing spacecraft. Your search for the scattered pieces takes you through 12 alien worlds filled with menacing armies, black holes, booby traps, and strange gravity.

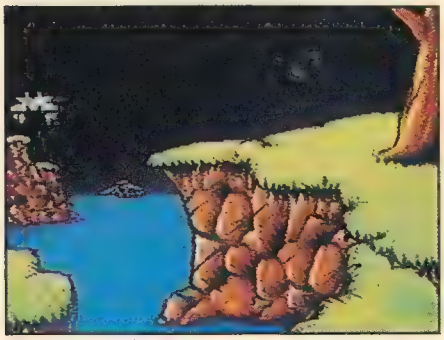
Each time your mothership lands on an alien planet, Solar Jetman emerges in a jetpod. It might take awhile to get the hang of flying the jetpod because it's sensitive to the pull of each planet's gravity, and the gravity varies from planet to planet.

As you explore each new world, you'll find alien booty that's yours for the taking. The jetpod's tractor beam activates automatically when you get close to the loot, but keep an eye out for alien attackers. You have to deactivate the pod's shields to use the tractor beam, and your power is reduced when you have an object in tow.

When you are attacked, the jetpod can fire a stream of bullets at your enemy. By collecting enough alien loot to earn extra points, you can buy more powerful weapons.



The cyberzone takes you to a bonus round where you can earn points to buy weapons and supplies.

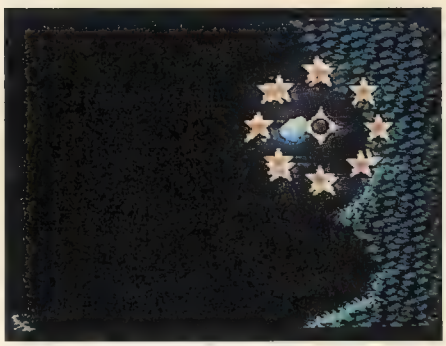


Travel from planet to planet in your mothership and get ready to explore strange new worlds.

You can't leave in the mothership until you collect all the essential items hidden on the planet. These items include a missing piece of the Golden Warpship (one piece is hidden on each planet) and enough fuel to continue your mission.

A distant descendant of the classic arcade hit *Asteroids*, *Solar Jetman* is a shooter with a twist. The search for the Golden Warpship adds challenge to the game, and the different gravity fields make handling your ship more difficult than in most shooters. While the main game screens are fairly average, the planet surfaces, warp zones, bonus rounds, and outer space graphics may be sharp enough to impress players who think they've seen everything.

GP



This star warp will transport you to the piece of the Golden Warpship that's hidden on the planet.

GAME BOY REVIEWS

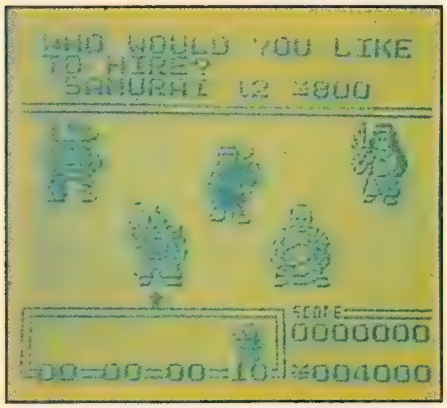
MERCENARY FORCE

William R. Trotter

Version reviewed: Game Boy. Meldac, 1801 Century Park East, Suite 2201, Los Angeles, CA 90067.

Mercenary Force is one of the most complex and elaborate shooters we've seen for the Game Boy. It has lots of action, but leaves room for some strategy, too.

The game takes place during a turbulent period in 19th-century Japan. A shogun recruits a small band of his finest warriors to defeat the Dark Lord and his minions. It's your job to lead that small group through six levels of intense scrolling action. Throughout your mission, you must alter the formation of your force to meet the challenges of the changing terrain and new kinds of enemies.



Organize your troop on this screen. Balanced firepower is desirable, but remember not to spend all your money on warriors.

You start by choosing the members of your four-man troop. Select from servants (who are sturdy, inexpensive, and straight shooters), mystics (who can shoot vertically), monks (who can fire diagonally), ninjas, or samurai. Each type of warrior has unique abilities, and each costs a different amount to hire.

As you move from screen to screen, you need to rearrange your group to make the best use of your firepower. If you have three servants in line, for example, you can sweep the screen straight ahead with massed fire. If the enemy endangers your flanks, you can put a servant in front, followed by a monk and a mystic, thus giving you a full 180-degree arc of fire.

When you slay an enemy, he leaves behind a fallen coin. Collect as many coins as you can, because you'll need them when you reach one of the cafes, temples, or shrines. You can purchase health-restoring food or medicine, and even resurrect dead heros.

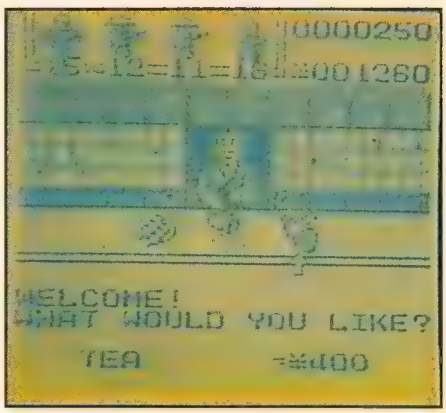
Mercenary Force is a big game. Your campaign takes you across 72 different screens, and you'll have to battle more than 50 kinds of enemies, human and demonic.

The Formation of the Wind is a good choice when the game starts — it offers an optimum spread of firepower.

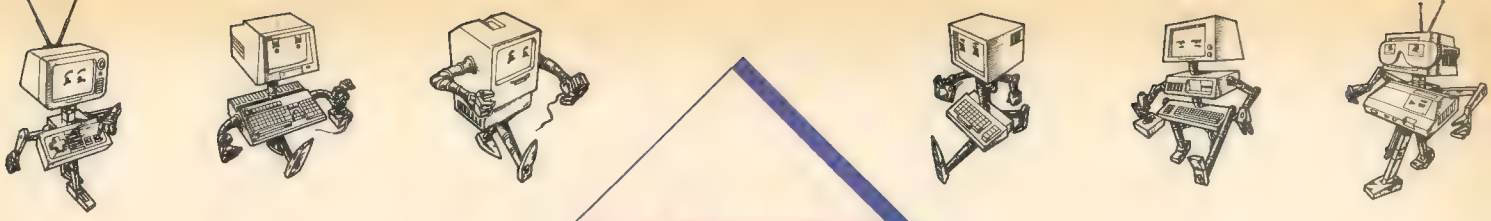
In *Mercenary Force*, Meldac pushes hard at the boundaries of the Game Boy, providing almost more game than the system can comfortably hold.

If you're looking for a shooter that demands some brainpower as well as strong thumbs, *Mercenary Force* may surprise and delight you.

GP



Inside the cafe, you can spend your coins on medicine to power-up your leader, or on tea and sushi to provide a lesser amount of refreshment to your whole force.



NINTENDO REVIEWS

THE IMMORTAL

William R. Trotter

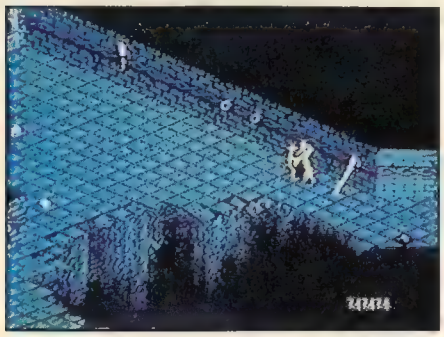
Version reviewed: Nintendo. Electronic Arts, 1820 Gateway Drive, San Mateo, CA 94404.

It was big news for game players when Electronic Arts announced that it would start making videogames for the Nintendo and Sega Genesis. EA has long been one of the most famous and successful companies in computer gaming, and everyone was curious about what sort of Nintendo games their designers would come up with.

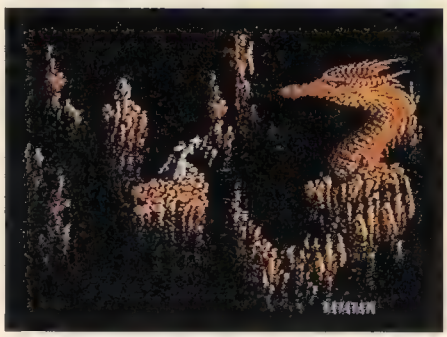
Well, EA's first Nintendo cartridge has arrived, and it's an absolute knockout. Although *The Immortal* is basically just an explore-the-dungeon quest adventure, the graphics bring a whole new dimension to Nintendo role-playing games.

When *The Immortal* begins, you assume the role of an adventurous wizard who is visited in a dream by the spirit of a great arch-wizard, Mordamir. "Save me, Dunric!" the old wizard implores. "I am in the dungeons below! I know I can count on you."

There's just one problem: Your name isn't Dunric. But never mind. You'll meet up with Dunric far, far below, after finding your way through perilous chambers and rat-infested corridors, all guarded by goblins galore. It's a long and dangerous quest, but it looks so good and so different, you'll feel like it's the first time you've played a game like this.



The dungeons are shown from a fresh, distinctive perspective, and the screen sparkles with detail.



EA's programmers must have been determined to see how far they could push the graphics potential of the eight-bit Nintendo.

Gone are the conventional horizontally and vertically scrolling screens. Nor is there a character's-eye-view perspective that can sometimes be so confusing. Instead, *The Immortal* presents the Labyrinth of Eternity from a three-quarter view, with the solid dungeon walls and ceilings shown as massive blocks of solid black.

The unusual graphics create a sense of subterranean gloom and weight. The atmosphere is reinforced by many fine, crisp details: shading, shadows, flickering lights, ominous voids, and the textures of stone, smoke, and water. *The Immortal* also has some of the best animation ever seen in a Nintendo game. It's breathtakingly good.

What's even more unusual is that this game *sounds* good, too, thanks to the moody and elaborate background music.

Combat screens feature smooth animation and realistic figures.

Of course, sky-high graphics and sound don't necessarily make a game fun to play. Judged in terms of game play, *The Immortal* is tough but fair. Beginners should be able to struggle through it eventually, and veteran questers will find a respectable level of challenge.

GP

NEC REVIEWS

SUPER STAR SOLDIER

Tom R. Halfhill

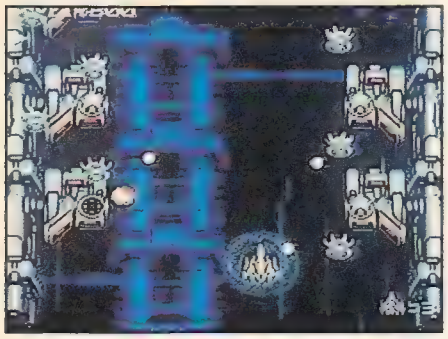
Version reviewed: NEC TurboGrafx-16. NEC Technologies, 1255 Michael Drive, Wood Dale, IL 60191.

Playing *Super Star Soldier* is like trying to make your way through a heavy blizzard. So much stuff comes at you so fast that if you stand still too long, you'll be buried.

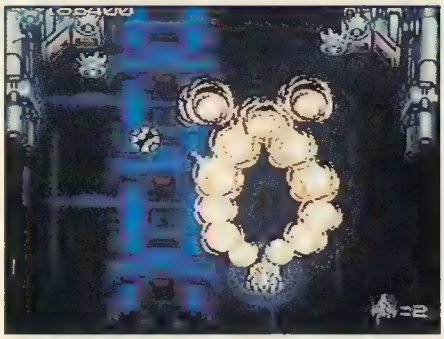
This fast-moving shooter has more objects moving on the screen at once than any other videogame we've seen. At times, the action gets so thick that it's difficult to locate your own ship on the crowded screen. Yet the animation never slows down or gets jerky, and the dozens of moving objects never flicker.

Although the action is incredibly complex, the game itself is not. *Super Star Soldier* is an uncomplicated, vertically scrolling shooter in the tradition of *Blazing Lazers*. In fact, it could easily be mistaken for a souped-up sequel to *Lazers*.

As Starbuck, a crack fighter pilot, you control a highly maneuverable spaceship that can be guided anywhere on the screen (though the safest place is usually near the bottom center). Most of your battles are fought in outer space on a jet-black screen adorned with star fields and enemy bases, but some stages take place over planetary landscapes dotted with elaborate alien installations.



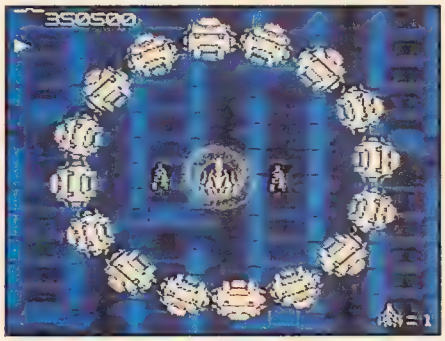
Rapid-firing cannons and alien gunships are just a few of the hazards to overcome as you fight your way through this enemy space station.



Armed with Swing Fire, you can greet attacking aliens with a very warm welcome.

The rules are simple: Shoot everything that moves. But that's a tall order in this game, because just about *everything* moves. Even the backgrounds aren't benign. For example, sometimes when you're passing over an alien space station, a small section of the structure suddenly detaches and reveals itself to be a deadly gunship. And the alien bases are bristling with gun turrets.

Another impressive feature is the awesome array of weapons you can collect. By grabbing the different-colored power-up crystals left behind by vanquished aliens, you can get three-way, four-way, and six-way shots; lethal green lightning bolts; Ring Lasers that cut wide swaths through onrushing attackers; homing missiles that automatically seek out enemy targets; tiny escort ships that repel alien shots; giant tongues of flame that barbecue anything they touch; and Super Bombs that destroy everything on the screen.



You're surrounded! Unfortunately for you, these circling aliens have more on their minds than a pleasant game of ring-around-the-rosy.

If you bought your NEC TurboGrafx-16 on the promise of arcade-quality 16-bit graphics, *Super Star Soldier* is one game that definitely delivers.

GP

NINTENDO REVIEWS

THE SILVER SURFER

Jeff Lundrigan

Version reviewed: Nintendo. Arcadia/Virgin Mastertronic, 18001 Cowan, Suites A & B, Irvine, CA 92714.

The Silver Surfer is one of Marvel Comics' most powerful characters. He was endowed with "the Power Cosmic" by Galactus, whose hunger for energy consumes entire worlds. When Galactus threatened to consume Earth — which reminded the Surfer of his own home planet, Zenn-La — the Surfer rebelled, and Galactus banished him from the universe.

In Arcadia's new Nintendo game, the Silver Surfer has been called back by Galactus. The universe is threatened from beyond by the Magik Warriors, who want to assemble the six pieces of the Cosmic Device and break down the barrier between our universe and theirs. Only the Silver Surfer can recover the pieces first and defeat the Magik Warriors.

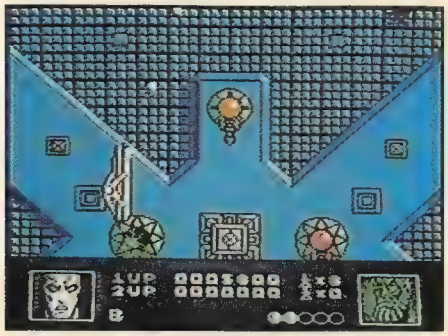
Each of the game's five worlds represents the domain of one of the Silver Surfer's enemies, and they can be played in any order. At the end of each world, you defeat a boss to retrieve one piece of the Cosmic Device. After defeating all five bosses, you are ready to venture into the Magik Domain, retrieve the sixth piece, and overcome the forces of darkness.

You can take on the enemies of the universe in any order, but you might want to start with either Reptyl or Mephisto and leave the Firelord for last.

The Firelord's world is full of small volcanos that spit lava into the air. Wait for one lava jet to pass, then immediately go up and to the right.

From time to time you can increase your firepower by collecting various items, including orbs which fly alongside you and fire simultaneously. You can choose whether the orbs will shoot forward, backward, or sideways. You can also collect power-ups to boost your shots and smart bombs which destroy everything on the screen.

The Silver Surfer's graphics are well above par for a shooter. The opening sequence is nicely done,



The game alternates sections of horizontal scrolling with vertical scrolling — a nice touch that adds variety to the action.

and although the screen gets pretty crowded during play, it almost never flickers. The music is also surprisingly good.

The game's only major problem is that it doesn't really make much use of the Silver Surfer's character. Although in the comics he has enough power to change the course of stars and planets, in the game he's reduced to throwing little balls of energy that often require multiple hits to work. You could, in fact, replace him with almost any other character without affecting the game play.

But this is a complaint only fans of the comics might make. Overall, *The Silver Surfer* is a well-made, challenging shooter.

GP

REVIEWS

SPIRIT OF EXCALIBUR

William R. Trotter

Version reviewed: IBM, Tandy, and compatibles; 512K minimum memory (640K for VGA); EGA, MCGA, VGA, or Tandy 16-color graphics; mouse or joystick optional. Virgin Mastertronic, 18001 Cowan, Suites A and B, Irvine, CA 92714.

Even after a thousand years, the legends of King Arthur and his knights have not lost their power to excite and entertain. In *Spirit of Excalibur*, you assume the role of Constantine, Arthur's successor to the throne of Camelot.

The realm is beset by troubles: The sons of the slain Mordred are massing an army; powerful Saxon

Lush, romantic graphics are this game's strongest attraction.

bands are plundering; dragons roam the countryside; and in the wilderness, the evil Morgan Le Fay schemes for revenge.

Meanwhile, the Knights of the Round Table are scattered and apathetic. The only man who can rally them, Lancelot, is sequestered at Glastonbury, brooding over his betrayal of Arthur and his lost love, Guinivere.

First you must travel to Camelot to assume the crown. Then, while fending off the Saxons and maneuvering to delay Mordred's sons, you must somehow persuade Lancelot to return and once more

Plan your kingly strategy on this beautiful map of Olde Englande.

raise the standard of Arthur.

And that's only in the first two of five episodes. Along the way are numerous smaller quests and duels, interspersed with larger clashes between armies.

Excalibur is undoubtedly one of the prettiest games to come along in quite awhile. The large scrolling map of England is a work of art, and the castles, landmarks, villages, and cathedrals are sumptuously rendered, not unlike medieval manuscript illuminations. There is a lot of pleasure to be had simply by wandering around and looking at things.

The game system, however, is sometimes baffling. Your first quest, for instance, is *not* the one the instructions lead you to expect. Reasonable objectives — things that certainly appear easy enough to accomplish — are sometimes denied you for reasons that seem both murky and arbitrary. The manual appears to tell you all you need to know, but is actually mute on important subjects.

Eventually, just by wandering around and trying different ideas, you do get a feel for the game. Some players may lack the time or patience for this, while others may enjoy the learn-as-you-play philosophy.

Certainly, anyone who is attracted to the Arthurian legends should take a look at *Spirit of Excalibur*. It's a lush, beautiful game that is faithful to the myths that inspired it.

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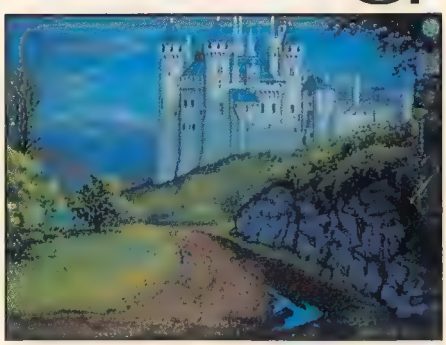


Much of the fun in *Spirit of Excalibur* comes from simple sightseeing.

NINTENDO REVIEWS

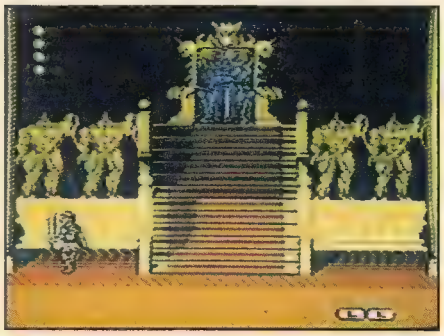
FRANKENSTEIN

Lisa M. Bouchey

Version reviewed: Nintendo. Bandai America, 12951 East 166th Street, Cerritos, CA 90701.

For years, all was peaceful in the country hamlet as the villagers tried to forget the days of carnage when *he* roamed the land. Surely they'd suffered enough.

But one day, a flash of lightning from the heavens struck the monster's tomb. Just like the bolt of energy that had first given him life, it awakened him again.

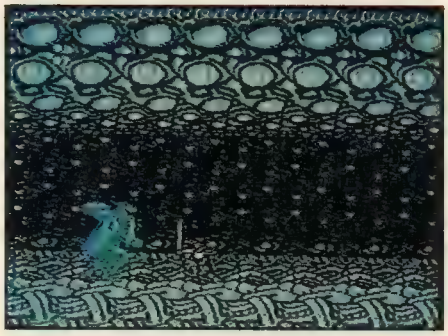


You must defeat the dark warrior and his henchmen to reach the Evil Dimension. The life symbols at the bottom right corner of the screen restore your energy.

As *Frankenstein* begins, the fiendish monster has ransacked the village and kidnapped Emily, the beautiful daughter of a village elder. He has also used evil magic to gather a band of monster bodyguards to protect himself from foolhardy rescue parties.

But the only rescue party in this game is *you*—the fate of Emily and the villagers rests entirely on your shoulders.

You have to fight your way through four stages on your way toward your ultimate encounter with Frankenstein's monster. In each stage, you'll confront increasing numbers of vicious bodyguards. Destroy the monsters by punching, kicking, and using weapons you find on your journey.



The sword is an effective weapon, but you'll have to deliver some mighty blows to defeat this monster.

Keep an eye on the energy meter at the top left corner of the screen. When you're hit by a monster, you lose energy, and when all your energy is gone, your character collapses. *Frankenstein* allows two continues for restarting the game from the stage where you collapsed.

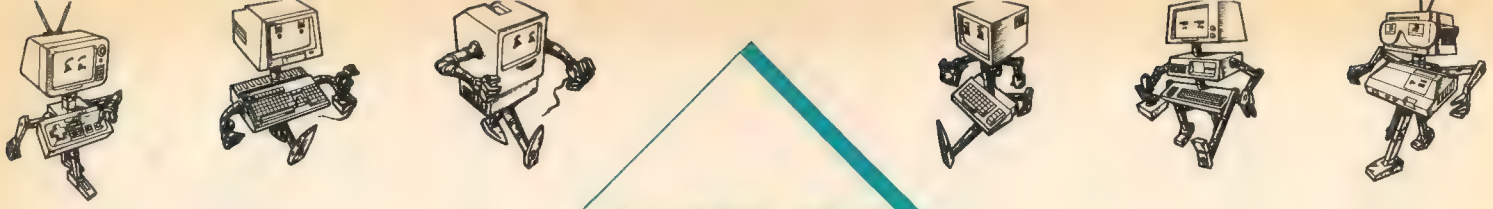
Each stage also has a boss monster you must defeat. Before you fight, the game switches to a dialogue screen on which the monster calls you ugly names and challenges you to battle. Since sticks and stones can break your bones but words can never hurt you, just skip the dialogue screen by pushing the A button.

Be careful when battling the boss monsters. They are far more powerful than the ordinary monsters, and it takes many blows to defeat them. If you make it past all four bosses and through the Evil Dimension, you'll find yourself face-to-face with the fiendish, oversized Frankenstein's monster.

Send the ultimate Frankenstein's monster back to the grave forever to rescue the beautiful Emily and save the village from certain doom.

Frankenstein is an arcade-style, scrolling shoot-em-up with a wide variety of graphics, but sometimes the screens get a little too cluttered for you to keep a sharp eye on the enemy.

GP



NINTENDO REVIEWS

DIRTY HARRY

Brian Carroll

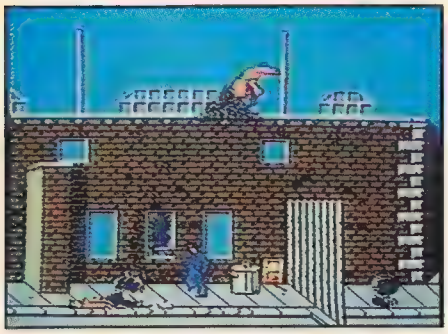
Version reviewed: Nintendo. Mindscape/The Software Toolworks, 60 Leveroni Court, Novato, CA 94949.

Clint Eastwood's Harry Callahan is a ruthless cop who's just this side of the law. In *Dirty Harry*, the new videogame based on the movies, Callahan crosses that line.

Search each and every room for weapons, useful items, and chili dogs.

Armed with a .44 Magnum — which Harry affectionately calls "the most powerful handgun in the world" — you must stop a Colombian drug lord who's setting up shop on your home turf in San Francisco. The kingpin's name is Anaconda, and he doesn't like cops.

Your problem: The police chief has just ordered you to take two weeks' vacation. But Harry's idea of rest and relaxation is putting criminals behind bars.



Be careful — one misstep and you could become "Catch of the Day."

In this case, that means apprehending a notorious murderer who has hired hordes of hooligans, street gangs, dock workers, mercenaries, and paratroopers for the sole purpose of eliminating you. All of these punks are going to make your day.

Before leaving for your unauthorized "vacation," remember one of Callahan's cardinal rules: "A man's gotta know his limitations." In *Dirty Harry*, one of those limitations is that you lack the weapons necessary to get past some of the larger foes. You must comb the city in search of either a harpoon gun or a bazooka.

Explore each and every room in every building for weapons, useful items, and life-boosting chili dogs. It's also important to establish rapport with the town's lowlifes. Do this by walking up to them and pressing the A and B buttons simultaneously. This should elicit some valuable help for your cause.

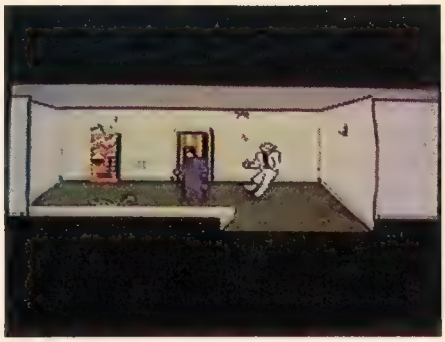
The cause, or the chase, is what makes this game go. Gamers of all skill levels will find it a challenge to survive long enough to rescue a missing girl and solve the case.

Unfortunately, *Dirty Harry* is missing something — the Eastwood Factor. In the *Dirty Harry* movies, it was Clint Eastwood's laid-back approach to vengeance that carried the day. In the game, Callahan and his enemies lack any personality. They're faceless and generic.

Another problem is the violence. In the movie *Magnum Force*, Callahan said, "There's nothing wrong with shooting as long as the right people get shot." In the videogame, Harry shoots, punches, and kicks *everybody*. There's lots of action, but not much strategy.

If you're looking for a solid shoot-em-up, don't miss *Dirty Harry*. But if you're an Eastwood/Callahan fan, you might be disappointed.

GP

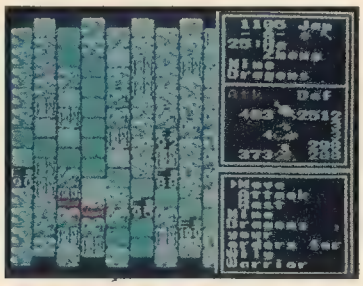


Switch suits with a friendly local if you want to get past this bodyguard.

AND PREVIEWS

NES STRATEGY GAME FROM KOEI

Koei's *Bandit Kings of Ancient China* brings the danger and excitement of medieval China to your Nintendo Entertainment System. The new strategy game is set in 12th-century China, where the Song Dynasty is near collapse. The evil Imperial Minister Gao Qiu has taken control from the emperor, and hordes of barbarians are invading from the north. All men loyal to the emperor have been cast out and have become Bandit Kings. The Bandit Kings live for one thing only: the chance to topple Gao from the throne and restore the emperor to his rightful place.



Save a dynasty from falling in *Bandit Kings of Ancient China.*

As a Bandit King, you must rack up enough popularity, economic strength, political power, and military prowess to defeat the sinister Gao. To reach Gao, you and your army must overcome typhoons, epidemics, desertions, and wild beasts.

Bandit Kings of Ancient China is one of the first Nintendo games to make use of the new MMC-5 microchip. The MMC-5 offers improved graphics, character control, and game play.

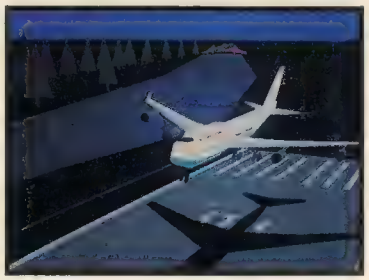
DESIGN SCENERY, PLANES FOR *FLIGHT SIMULATOR*

Microsoft's *Flight Simulator Aircraft and Scenery Designer* is intended for use with Microsoft's *Flight Simulator* Version 4.0. Developed with help from Boeing, the *Aircraft and Scenery Designer* allows you to create both new landscapes and aircraft.

When designing scenery, you can choose the size, shape, position, and color of roads, bridges, runways, mountains, and more. You can even re-create your own town and local airport. You also have control over moving scenery, such as boats, cars, and planes. The finished scenery is very detailed, including trees that change color with the seasons.

The aircraft-design section comes with several sample planes, including a Piper Archer, a Beech Starship, and a Boeing 747-400 (complete with authentic instrument panels and flight characteristics).

You can also use the *Aircraft and Scenery Designer* to create your own course for air races. The program will keep a record of your best times and performances.



The *Flight Simulator Aircraft and Scenery Designer* gives you total control over a Boeing 747-400.

BIG-TOP ADVENTURES IN *CIRCUS CAPER* FOR NES

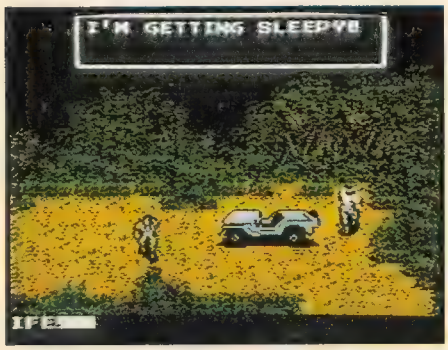
In *Circus Caper*, a new Nintendo title from Toho, a mysterious circus owner named Mr. Magic has kidnapped a little girl named Judy. But Judy's brother, Tim, is determined to rescue her. He must battle his way through six stages of sinister clowns, wicked trapeze artists, and dangerous animals.

Tim gets some help along the way, though. A good fairy occasionally appears and offers him rest, advice, and chances for bonus points. Tim can also pick up hammers, soccer balls, and other weapons with which to fight the demented performers. Power-boosting hamburgers and ice cream can be collected after certain creatures are destroyed.

Tim tries to avoid deadly flames in *Circus Caper.*

AND PREVIEWS

NINTENDO GAMES TURNED INTO BOOKS



Enjoy the adventures of *Metal Gear* in Konami's new book series.

Konami and Scholastic Books have agreed to publish novelizations of two popular Nintendo games from Konami — *Castlevania II: Simon's Quest* and *Metal Gear*.

In the *Simon's Quest* novel, vampire-killer Simon Belmont joins forces with a teenage videogame expert. They travel to Castlevania to track down and destroy the evil Count Dracula.

In the *Metal Gear* novel, secret agent Justin Halley faces many dangerous enemies as he tries to save the world from destruction.

Konami's Charlyne Robinson, a former teacher, believes the new book series will encourage children to read. "By offering books they can relate to, we can, hopefully, rekindle their appreciation for the written word."

Each book will also provide a reading list of classics related to the book's plot. Such books as *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson are recommended for additional reading.

TWO GAMES FOR NEC

Jack Nicklaus Turbo Golf will be the first NEC TurboGrafx-16 title from Accolade, a well-known computer game publisher. Featuring actual golf courses on which pro golfer Jack Nicklaus has played, *Turbo Golf* will allow up to three players to compete in a foursome that includes a computerized Nicklaus. Players can also compete against each other by selecting the beginner or expert levels with pro, men's, and ladies' tees.

Turbo Golf will also be the first TurboGrafx title to be released on both a TurboChip game cartridge and a TurboGrafx-CD compact disc. The cartridge version features the 18 holes of the Australian Golf Club and provides players with some of Nicklaus's best golf tips prior to each hole. The CD version, because of its much larger storage capacity, features five different 18-hole courses: the Australian Golf Club, Castle Pines in Colorado, the Royal Troon in Scotland, Kemper Lakes in Illinois, and St. Creek in Japan. The CD version also includes three different musical soundtracks and Nicklaus's golf tips in his own digitized voice.

Both versions of *Turbo Golf* were scheduled for release by the end of 1990.

NEC is also licensing *Gunboat*, an Accolade computer game, for translation to the TurboGrafx. *Gunboat* is a military action game based on the U.S. Navy river patrol boats used in the Vietnam War. *Gunboat* is scheduled for release in the summer of 1991.

Jack Nicklaus Turbo Golf for the NEC TurboGrafx-16

KLASHBALL FOR NES

SOFEL's first sports title for Nintendo will be *KlashBall*, a futuristic combination of soccer, basketball, and hockey. Based on a best-selling European computer game, *KlashBall* pits two five-man teams against each other on a rink with a sleek metal surface. The object is to maneuver a five-pound steel ball into the opponent's goal. The rink includes such contraptions as a Warp Tunnel, a Ball Launcher, and a magnetically charged Bounce Dome. And bribing the referees is an acceptable part of the game.

The Nintendo version of *KlashBall* will allow a single player to compete in a tournament against computer-controlled teams, or two players to compete against each other.

AND PREVIEWS

TWO STRATEGY GAMES FOR AMIGA

One of the many backgrounds in the Amiga version of *Ishido*

Ishido: The Way of Stones from Accolade and *Nobunaga's Ambition* from Koei are now available for Amiga computers. Both games were previously released for IBM, Tandy, and PC compatibles. *Ishido* is also being released for the Sega Genesis, and *Nobunaga's Ambition* is available for Nintendo.

Ishido is based on an ancient game in which two players try to place stones bearing different symbols and colors onto a 92-square board. Each stone must be placed next to another stone with the same markings or of the same color. Placing stones becomes more difficult as the game progresses, and larger numbers of points are awarded for matching two, three, and even four sides of the stones. *Ishido* comes with several different stone sets, playing boards, and background screens. You can play against the computer or another person, and follow either ancient or modern rules.

Nobunaga's Ambition is a historical strategy game set in 16th-century Japan. You play the role of a power-hungry daimyo (warlord), fighting for the honor of becoming Japan's next shogun. Leadership and power are important as you try to increase your strength and lead your army to victory over enemy generals. Natural disasters and bloody battles decrease your power as you struggle against rival daimyos.

Koei says the Amiga version has been improved over the PC version. It has pull-down menus, mouse support, and digitized sound and music.

COMMODORE'S FIRST CDTV TITLES

Commodore has announced 34 compact-disc software titles scheduled to be available when Commodore's CDTV player is launched in early 1991. The software ranges from strategy and action games to educational and home-reference applications.

Games include *Battle Chess* and *Future Wars* from Interplay; *Airwave Adventure — The Case of the Cautious Condor* from Tiger Media; *Defender of the Crown* from Cinemaware; *Classic Board Games* from Merit Software; *Many Roads to Murder* and *Murder Anyone?* from Vent; *Excalibur* from Virgin Mastertronic; *Space Quest III* from Sierra On-Line; *Pacmania* from Domark; and *Xenon II*, *Falcon*, and *Sim City* from Spectrum Holobyte.

Children's titles include *Cinderella*, *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, *Scary Poems for Rotten Kids*, *A Long Hard Day at the Ranch*, *Moving Gives Me a Stomach Ache*, and *The Paper Bag Princess* from Discis; *Animated Coloring Book* from Gold Disk; *All Dogs Go to Heaven* from Merit Software; *Snoopy* from The Edge; *North Polar Expedition* from Virgin Mastertronic; and *Fun School* from Mandarin.

Home-reference applications include *Gardenfax — Houseplants* from Intersearch; *King James Bible* and *Illustrated Works of Shakespeare* from Animated Pixels; *World Vista Atlas* from Applied Optical Media; *Family Medical Advisor* from Digita; *Japan World* from TopClass Tech; and *Time Table of Science & Innovation*, *Time Table of Business & Politics*, *New Basics Electronic Cookbook*, and *The American Heritage Encyclopedic Dictionary* from Xiphias.

CDTV (Commodore Dynamic Total Vision) is a modified Amiga computer (without keyboard or floppy disk drive) combined with a CD-ROM player and a wireless remote controller. Designed to resemble a videocassette recorder, it plugs into a TV set and allows users to run CD-based software without entering computer commands. It can be turned back into an Amiga-compatible personal computer by adding an optional keyboard and floppy disk drive. CDTV is scheduled for launch in early 1991 for under $1,000. (For more details, see the "Amiga Players" column in *Game Player's*, August 1990.)

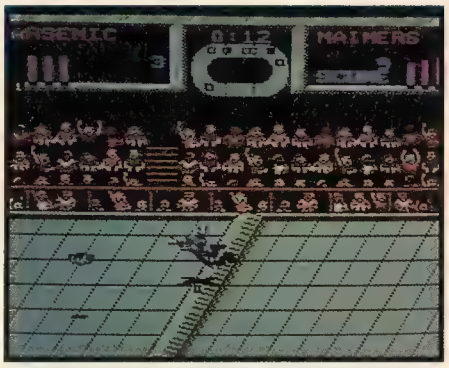
AND PREVIEWS

ROLLER DERBY GAME FOR NES

Rowdy fans, hair-pulling skaters, and wild fights are all part of the game in Jaleco's *War on Wheels*, a new title for Nintendo. *War on Wheels* has many of the elements of classic roller derby action. Two teams of opposing skaters try to score points by passing opponents on a rink studded with bumps, ramps, pits, and grates.

Eight teams, including the Phangs and Maimers, compete for the title of Roller Derby Champ. After selecting a team, you can compete against either the computer or another person in a round-robin tournament.

It's important to manage your team well, because your skaters can be tripped up in more ways than one. Rival teams body-slam and pick fights with your team, causing injuries. Rabid fans throw food onto the rink and pummel any skater unlucky enough to get thrown outside of the rink.



Watch out for bumps as you skate your way to victory in *War on Wheels*.

Fights are seen in closeup views, and you control your skaters' kicks and punches. If you knock out an opponent, your team earns extra points. And if things start getting too dull, just get the fans riled up—they'll start thrashing each other, allowing you to take a breather.

GP

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HOW MUCH IS A MEMBERSHIP?

The membership is free with any purchase over $50.00 or if you call 1-900-TIP-LINE. This costs only .95 a minute. Leave your name, address and phone number with area code.

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12. We buy direct! Who knows where the rest get their product.
13. We buy used games for credit towards everything we sell!
14. We were the 1st to sell Japanese games and systems by mail.
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16. We supply American translations for all Japanese games and systems where available!
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18. We also have tips, hints and passcodes for the games you buy from us, both American and Japanese!
19 We ship to more places by more means than any other company!
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I hope this answered some of your questions. Those of you ordering from other companies give us a call and see what you think. Those of you who have never ordered by mail, please give us a try. We will do our best to make your shopping experience a pleasure.

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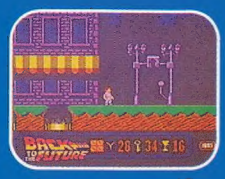

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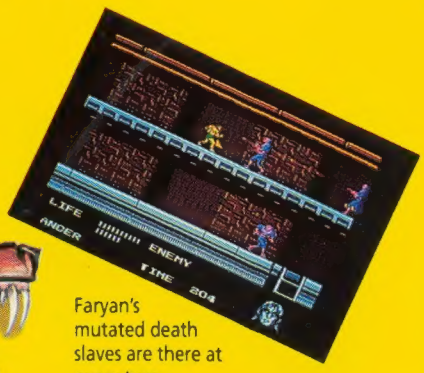

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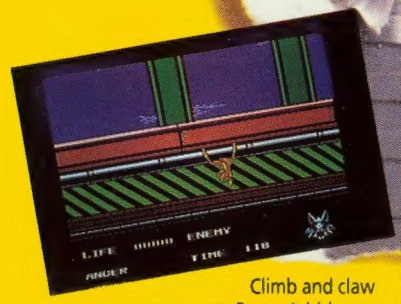

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